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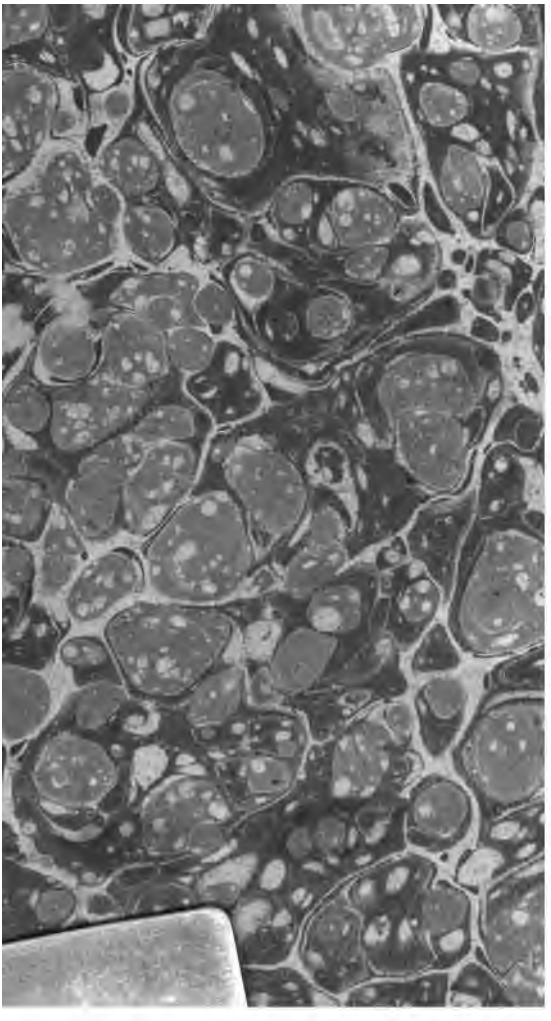

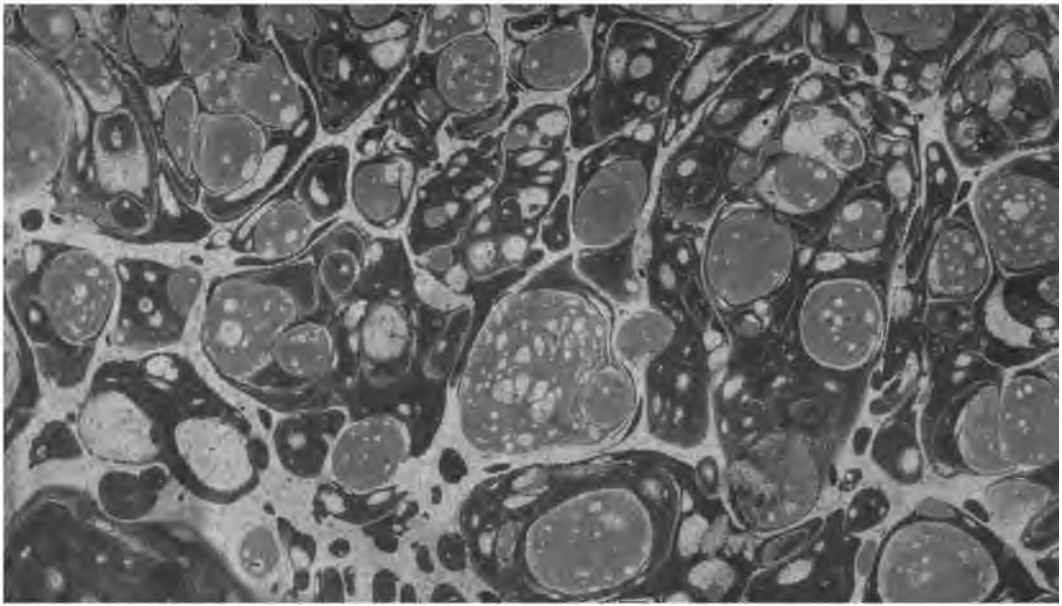

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Romney del. R. Blyth sc.

These are the only visitants he knows,
Save, now and then a straggling passenger,
At wake or fair-time, who leans o'er his hatch,
Enquiring there the doubtful road. ———

Page 14

Published by Vernor & Hood, Poultry, May. 1st 1803.

Scenes of Youth;

OR

RURAL RECOLLECTIONS;

WITH

OTHER POEMS.

BY

WILLIAM HOLLOWAY.

"Such rural life! so calm, it little yields
Of interesting act, to swell the page
Of history or song; yet much the soul
Its sweet simplicity delights."——Scott's Amwell.

LONDON:

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PREFACE.

THE following attempt originated in a trifling sketch, intended to be called "The COTTAGE;" the grounds around which produced, at first, only a few shrubs and wild flowers, among which Fancy loved to wander, but from whence no real advantage could be derived. The author, however, conceiving the soil capable of further improvement, set about cultivating it and extending its boundaries; and, in the progress of his labours, has not unfrequently pleased himself with the prospects it afforded.

To drop figure and metaphor...as the intention of "The Peasants Fate" was to com-

miserate the misfortunes of the poor, and deplore the calamities of the war, the principal object of the author, in the following pages, was to draw a comparison between private and public life, and to contrast city and country "modes and manners;" in the execution of which he has chosen the familiar and colloquial style of blank verse, as the best adapted to answer his purpose.

It has been said, that poets succeed best in *fiction:* some attempts have lately been made to controvert this assertion; and they have not proved ineffectual...as *Truth* must therefore have, at least, the claim of *novelty*, it is worth while to follow up the experiment of bringing her into play.

Most of the pieces in this volume are sketched from nature; and, if they do not evince the skill of a master, they at least

serve to keep alive, in the mind of the author, the remembrance of "Things that *were*, and were most dear to him!" and they might afford some amusement to those who possess the same sentiments, and are capable of relishing the same simple pleasures.

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SCENES OF YOUTH,

&c.

ARGUMENT.

Subject introduced. Rural Landscape. Village
Childish Amusements. The Castle. The E
Man in the Moon. Fairy Ring. Evan the
cide. Walter the Miller's Boy. Concludin
flections, &c.

BOOK I.

WHAT various beauties, what unbounded charms
The still retreats of country-life afford,
Though scorn'd by Folly and pedantic Pride,
The Muse, unwearied, ever joys to sing.
Ye, who the clangors of the hostile strain
Alone delight to hear, be far away;
She has no charms for you: with heart elate,
She hails the omens of reviving hope,
To cheer a drooping land: beneath the shade,

Meek PEACE! of thy broad olive, kindly thrive
The *rural Virtues*, objects of her love,
And ever favourite subjects of her song.
I own I hate the brazen trump of war;
Nor politics nor parties share my theme;
Yet though, with bashful care, I turn aside
To shun the jostle of the bustling crowd,
In this eventful age...reputed wise,
Enlightened, and I know not what beside...
That laughs at all its ancestors admir'd;
Simplicity, Humanity, and Truth,
Virtue, and social Order...O! 'tis hard
To walk, of crooked politics secure,
Unprejudic'd, unbias'd, or unaw'd!

Line 15. Alluding to some hasty, critical opinions with regard to the sentiment of the "Peasants Fate."

v. 23. Continued.

Parties, 'tis said, may serve the commonweal...
May check, control, and trace, with jealous eye,
The various motions of the state machine;
But ever to the independent mind,
Their tools are mean and despicable things!
I never to a party yet subscrib'd,
With easy faith...opinion still unfix'd...
On *either* hand abuse, corruptions, wrongs,
Alternate rise, and quash the crude resolve:
I hesitate, by turns, disgusted, pleas'd...
Still wish to shun a party, as a fiend,
And stand, in conscious rectitude, aloof!
How much unlike the city's crowded scenes,...
The scenes of dissipation, guilt, and care,...
Where seldom sober Meditation comes,
Are those lov'd haunts, which beck'ning Mem'ry bids

My willing heart retrace! How sweet to steal,
From public tumult, to the grateful shades,
Where first young Reason exercis'd her powers!
Remember'd long, adown the far-stretch'd vale,...
Where elms, from Nature's hand confus'dly thrown,
With brushy trunks, in distance thick'ning, rise,...
The scatter'd hamlets interspers'd appear:
White are the cottage walls, save where the veil
Of dark-green ivy, rustling in the breeze,
Shivers along the eaves, where here and there
A flapping casement glitters, like the eyes
Of nubile maiden, from beneath the shade
Of sable gauze, that hides her blushing cheek
From "saucy observation." Soft and slow,
In mazes serpentine, a brimming rill
Visits the farm yard and the dairy door,

v. 55. Overflow of the Brook...Boys walking on Stilts.

In front of which, a slab of oak, or stone,
Yields safe conveyance to the passing swain,
Who never saw the decorated arch,
With Grecian pomp, bestride the sullen wave;
Yet sometimes here, with novelty still pleas'd,
When equinoctial torrents drench'd the hills,
I've seen this streamlet swoll'n into a flood:
White rolling, down it came, its surface strew'd
With leaves and ruddy apples, wisps of straw,
And rafts of furze and broom, in rapid whirls.
Then oft, high mounted on exalting stilts,
Midst my compeers, I, with gigantic step,
Have dar'd the tide, while, wond'ring, from afar,
The clamorous children view'd our proud exploits;
Till, staggering to and fro, and stumbling oft,
As the strong current struggled rude below,

Some vent'rous hero floundered in the gulph,
And one loud laugh proclaim'd his foul disgrace.
So chief, or statesman, rais'd on stilts of power,
Enjoys the admiration of the crowd;
But, should he trip, unpitied, lo! he falls...
The jest of favourites, and the scorn of fools!
In vain the doors are damm'd, the oozing flood
Bears down the mound, and eddies gradual in;
Then floats each buoyant utensil around,
Tub, chair, and stool; while all the family
Hastes to some loftier site, and pale dismay
Sits on each face, as anxious, peeping out,
Like dread-struck seamen, on a leeward shore,
They shrink and tremble at the tumbling surge.
Strange how, from sportive childhood's mental dawn,
The imitative faculties of man,

The pow'rs and passions ever keep in play,
To constant action form'd:...That sunny bank
Has witness'd oft the labours of my hand;
There, like another *Crusoe*, all alone,
Lost in soliloquy, I've toil'd, and delv'd
The rude foundations of a rustic pile;
Without the aid of geometric rule,
The structure rose, and pleas'd the builder well;
'Twas called his CASTLE; and behind, a grove
Of elder boughs, stuck thick along the soil,
Wav'd their broad heads, with coral berries crown'd,
And form'd a little wilderness of shade.
Hence Fancy wander'd thro' the woodland wilds,
Where, to the cruel ruffian's hand consign'd,
By perjur'd uncle, in a fatal hour,
The much-mourn'd infant orphans met their doom;

And oft I queried, as he hover'd round,
Whether my fav'rite robin, ever nigh,
Was not the self-same bird, whose pious bill
Cover'd with leaves the little luckless pair,
And pour'd, with plaintive trill, their funeral dirge.
Far from the public footpath, and the haunt.
Of late or early hind, deep in a dell...
A braky dell, beneath a hedge-row's screen;
Two hazle bushes grew, whose heads above,
Saluting touch'd, and, rambling o'er the whole,
A blushing honeysuckle flaunted wild;
I call'd this spot my BOWER, where oft, escap'd
From gay companions, in their playful mood,
A willing hermit, calm I sat me down
Upon the mossy slope, and conn'd intent
The gilded volume, rich with anecdote.

Of tiny heroes, virtuous, learn'd, and wise,
Who reach'd the heights of fortune and of fame,
Nor with more curious eye...or studious thought,
The Scandinavian sage...his country's boast...
Explor'd the works of NATURE, for *her* child.
Was I, and lov'd her with a filial love!
Oft o'er the emmet-commonwealth I paus'd;
Studied their population, manners, rules,
And public toils, as swarming through their streets,
The busy multitude incessant plied
Their labours, provident...the ponderous grain,
Or bulky egg, up-lifting o'er the stones,
With mighty and united efforts, till
Deposited in caverns, warm and dry,
Storehouse and nursery of the frugal race...

Line 122. Linnæus, who was a native of Sweden.

Emblem of industry to lordly man!

Here found the traveller-bee employment meet,
For here Spring's earliest violets breath'd and bloom'd,
The dark-eyed children of the loneliest shade!
The brake-flow'r too, that waves in wilds unknown,
And bears old Sherwood's gallant archer's name;
The red-edg'd daisy, and the primrose meek,
With all the sweet coëvals of their race.

Much did the felon chaffer, copper-wing'd,
Annoy me, as he stripp'd the verdant bough,
And oft, entangled in my uncomb'd hair,
Awoke each puny petulance of mind;...
For this I doom'd his shoulders to the yoke...
Much, much, too cruelly!...and made him drag
Or massy clog, or cumbrous spray along.

Line 139. The flower called, in the West of England, *Robin Hood*.

v. 149. Tradition of the Man in the Moon.

But, still amus'd, I heard the ceaseless hum,
At evening-close...and mark'd his circling flight,
Till, down the lane, returning waggon-bells
Harmonious chim'd upon my list'ning ear,
And warn'd my truant footsteps to retire.
Then the full moon, from flaky clouds emerg'd,
Would catch my eye, while, pond'ring on her orb,
Still more distinct the lineaments appear'd
Of him, the hapless *Man*, who, gossips say,
For breach of fences on a sabbath eve,
By supernatural power, was thither hurl'd,
To do long penance; and still there he stands
With thorny load upon his aching back,
Beyond all human aid to set him free:...
No despicable lesson this to youth,
How secret vice to heav'n lies all expos'd,

And disobedience meets a due reward.

Slow plodding homeward, down the green hill's slope,

I fail'd not o'er the fairy-ring to pause,

Though half afraid, lest some fantastic sprights,...

Like those, which late, 'twas said, the shepherd boy

Saw, terrified!...should rise, and hem me round;

Nor suffer me to stir, till morn's approach,

When the first cock, with shrilly voice, should crow,

And scare the revellers to their secret bow'rs.

Succeeding summer-storms, when broke the sun,

In yellow splendor, from the evening skies,

Where rain from dripping caves a channel deep

Had worn, beside the gravell'd pathway flow'd

A silver stream, in breadth a humble span,

But which, in youthful Fancy's eye, appear'd

v. 180. The Mill—The Ship—Sensations on its Fate.

Nilus, or Rhine, or Ganges, rolling on,
Augmented by a thousand minor floods,
And watering lands by human foot untrac'd.
Across this stream an aqueduct we threw,
Or rear'd the mimic mill-wheel, which perform'd
Its evolutions with a constant pace.
Now, like the bold Batavian, we embay'd
The rushing waters, and restrain'd their force,
Then launch'd upon the flood the ventrous bark,
With sail diminutive, and streamer gay;
Nor felt the owner of some gallant ship,
Freighted with precious stores from either Ind,
More strong emotion than possess'd each breast,
When varying gales propell'd her to the shore,
Drove her impetuous on the pebble rock,
Or rudely whelm'd her in the circling wave.

Smile, *grey-beards!* smile, while thus the wand'ring Muse,
With puerile incidents adorns her song:...
Have ye ne'er tasted juvenile delights,
Nor ever dwelt on pastimes such as these?
Are your hearts grown too rigid to retain
The soft impressions, or too proud to own?
More sage are your sedater hours employ'd?...
No!...I have seen ye, in the eve of life,
Blowing gay bubbles, with an idiot's air,
Building your castles on the rolling wave,
Or soaring high, on waxen wings, to fame.
Nor will ye brook the strain, whose early days,
In variously-distracted cities spent,
Have been imur'd to far less venial sports,
Where the young seeds of folly, lust, or pride,

Fierce emulations, foul resentments, thrive,
Cherish'd, and foster'd, in the rankest soil,
And thence shoot up in rip'ning deeds of vice,
The bane and terror of a guilty land.
'Tis true the *little mischiefs*, even here,
Sometimes intrude, and show the wayward heart....
For where, half-hid, along the yellow moor,
Fresh breathing vernal sweets, the footpath creeps,
The playful urchins bend from either side,
The lank stemm'd flow'rs, and bind them fast across,
With dext'rous fingers; and in ambush wait
The thoughtless passing swain, whose half-learnt song,
Or jocund whistle, meets a sudden check,
As soon he stumbles short, with tangled feet,
Or, muttering dreadful vengeance, headlong falls.

Evan the Parricide...Relation of his Misfortune. v. 226.

So, by the thicket's side, a straggling hare,
In awkward, heedless gambols, limps along,
To seek his dark defile, where lurks, unseen,
The poacher's wire, in which, at ev'ning hour,
He quakes and struggles, helpless and betray'd.
But lo! each face assumes a serious cast,
For see, who yonder comes! with clouded brow,
And folded arms. 'Tis EVAN, hapless man!
At whose approach gay sport and youthful glee
Shrink back, abashed, and every heart feels sad.
O, pity him! nor rashly yet condemn,
For not from sense of meditated guilt,
Nor crimes deep rankling in the wounded breast,
His mental anguish flows....No! I have heard
His history from an old man's fluent tongue,
Who lov'd to lead me by the willing hand,

v. 240. His Tale continued.

While yet a trudging boy, across the fields,
To all my pert inquiries ready still
To give due answer, and to fill my ear
With tales of wonder. He remember'd well
When Evan was a hale and sprightly youth...
A worthy farmer's son...who many a year
Enjoy'd yon mansion, bosom'd in the crowd
Of granaries, ricks, and barns; distinguish'd there
But by a stack of clust'ring chimneys, green
With bracing ivy and adhering moss.
There dwelt domestic happiness and love...
(If happiness and love reside below,)
With all their smiling train, till sad mischance
Sapped every comfort, blasted every joy,
And wrapt a virtuous family in shade.
Twice had the cock, with time-recording note,

Announc'd the progress of the purple morn,
When Evan, from refreshing slumbers rous'd,
Call'd *Dashwood* forth, and snatch'd the ready gun...
A father's present, in his boyish days,
To scare the feather'd robbers of the field,
Ere yet allow'd the fateful shot to bear:
Now bolder grown, and in the work of death
Expert, no swain could boast a steadier aim,
Or better lov'd the sanguinary sport.
Wide rov'd the active youth, o'er hill and dale,
O'er fence and ford, while all was stillness round,
And sweet serenity; nor e'en afar
His father's voice was heard ... a well-known voice ...
Accustom'd, at the earliest peep of day,
To hail the shepherd, at the distant fold,
Or plowman, harnessing his jingling team;

He wonder'd much to find him not abroad;
Nor knew, that in the narrow winding lanes,
In quest of straggling sheep, intent, he rang'd.
Thick were the hedge-rows green; beneath their shade
The long grass waved, and high the wild flow'rs grew,
In rank luxuriance. There the list'ning hare
Sat deep embower'd...but caught his searching eye;
With hasty, erring hand, high o'er her head,
He pour'd the thunder of destruction dire;
But, ere the grey smoke vanish'd o'er the vale,
In light convolving wreaths, a deadly groan
Assail'd his ear! - Impatient, on he springs:
The bending boughs, and crashing fence give way,
When, lo! extended on the deep-worn road,...
Where still; 'tis said, the stones blood-stain'd appear,
Unchang'd by summer sun or winter storm,...

The *victim's father* met his shuddering view!
With cold hands clasp'd across his bleeding breast,
Speechless, in deathful agony, he rais'd
His eyes!...he look'd *forgiveness*, and expir'd!
Wild frenzy seiz'd the guiltless parricide
And darted maddening horror through his brain!
Amid the forest's thickest shade he plung'd,
And, like the maniac Gergesenes of old,
Who bow'd to Israel's great physician's pow'r,
Roar'd out the frantic anguish of his soul,
In glooms congenial; and refus'd to hear
The voice of comfort...alien to repose,
And all the winning scenes of social life.
Reclaim'd to woes, not to peace restor'd,
He cross'd th' Atlantic, to divert his mind
From sad reflection and corrosive woe,

On vast Columbia's shores; from where, in storms,
The far-stretch'd Andes hide their hundred heads,
To mighty Orellana's wondrous source,
La Plata's ocean-flood; or, more remote,
To isles far scatter'd o'er the southern main.
Worn, by the lapse of all-subduing time,
The keen asperities of rigid grief,
Once more the wand'rer sought his native shore,
And, led by painful sense of duty, came,
Involuntary, to the awful spot,
Where slept his father's hallow'd bones; and there,
At dewy dawn and silent eve, he pays
The punctual boon of undissembled tears.
His is yon cottage, by the common's side,
O'erhung by two old oaks, whose hollow trunks
Contain his stores of fuel, duly piled;

In summer's fairest days,...furze, billets, turf,
Or brushwood sere: around their turgent roots,
Accumulating heaps of ashes rise;
Nightly, above, the lone owl halloos loud,
And in the tufted branches, all day long,
Pert sparrows chirrup. On the ochreous wall,
Beneath the mossy eaves, by man unscar'd,
The swift-wing'd martin builds her labour'd nest,
And num'rous swallows haunt his chimney top:
These are the only visitants he knows,
Save, now and then, a straggling passenger,
At wake or fair-time, who leans o'er his hatch,
Enquiring there the doubtful road, dismiss'd,
With answer still abrupt; for none e'er yet
Obtain'd long audience, or could from him draw
The social converse: stern Reserve had lock'd

Rural Life not exempt from Cares.

s, inflexible; and, like the wretch,
nce had enter'd the Trophonian cave,
ile was ever known to cheer his brow.
ye misjudge, who deem the rural life
: from cares exempt: no human state
ast such privilege....Though half our ills
rom wants of luxury and pride,
ffspring of the fiend *Ennui*,
aunts the flow'ry paths where fashion treads,
ants with barbed thorns its couch of down.
ets tell us of a golden age;
uch as I revere th' Aonian train,
elieve them not. Since Adam sinn'd
bedience, no such age has been:
est progenitors enjoy'd it once
dise; but, ah! its date was short,

Extending never to their fated race.
Here happiness might bud, but never blooms;
Alone in Eden's sacred bowers it sprang
Indigenous, and bore immortal fruit...
Food only meet for angels, or for gods.

I know, indeed, there is in country life
A season that has charms,...and charms, perhaps,
Which none but true-born rustics can enjoy.
Youth is that season, and its joys are dear;
But doubly dear, when once its sands are run,
And fond Remembrance spreads the canvas wide,
Rich with the pow'rful magic of her hand.

Yet, though we sigh and pine for long-past scenes,
Not always do we find our comforts there,
When once push'd off on life's tempestuous main,
Should but a prosp'rous gale return us safe,

v. 370. Tendency of Pleasure to pall on Repossession.

After long absence, to our native shore,
What frames and feelings then are ours? Awhile
We taste the bliss sincere: but soon it palls;
And why? Because the age of innocence,
Of truth, and wond'ring novelty, is o'er,
Our taste for nature oft debauch'd by art,
And spoil'd by frequent commerce with the world.
One proof is near:...Deep in the silent shades
Of lone retirement, WALTER first drew breath;
His father own'd a mill, that lay'd yon stream,
Ample and clear, with water-lilies fring'd,
That, drooping, drank fresh vigour from the wave.
'Twas his, on slouching mare, of rev'rend age,
Who knew, by instinct, every cottage round,
Daily to visit, through the hamlets far,
Each door, collecting many a hard-earn'd grist;

Walter, the Miller's Boy.

For then no purse-proud miller had engross'd
The life-sustaining produce of the land,
Doom'd in extending granaries to rot,
While with the pride-swoll'n farmer he consp
To grind the helpless, and to starve the poor!
High mounted on his pil'd and dusty bags,
O'er which he hardly strides...with ruddy che
Of health expressive, and with mealy hat,
Oft have I mark'd the careless WALTER ride
Jocund, and whistling down the shady lane;
The only clamour he was wont to hear,
The clatter of the constant-toiling mill,
Or joyous bustle of a country wake.
Yet, ere the down of manhood grac'd his chi
Occasion brought him to the busy paths
Of public life, and soon the rustic boy

rgot his awkward gait and sheepish air:
ıbits of industry insur'd him friends,...
: join'd the eager, lucre-seeking throng,
ıd application led to due success.
rtune stretch'd forth her hand:...the goddess smil'd,
nd WALTER, ere the sun of life declin'd,
lt his heart sated with her lib'ral boon.
The weary trav'ller, who, with toilsome steps,
eneath the parching beams of summer sun,
las, breathless, climb'd some heathy upland steep,
When once he gains its eminence, looks back,
Astonish'd at the progress he has made;
Surveys the yellow meadows, fields, and streams,
And sighs for pleasures he has left behind:
So WALTER stopp'd, and sigh'd; for now he felt
His bosom languish for his native shades,...

Continued. v. 418.

'Twas there he promis'd to enjoy repose,
And give to peace the ev'ning of his days.
Awhile the project pleas'd:...the rural walks
That erst the *child* enjoy'd, the *man* entranc'd,
And every passion own'd the sweet serene....
Languor succeeds:...the vapid sameness tires;...
The woods grow inharmonious, and the meads
Lose all their beauty;...e'en his fav'rite stream
Can charm no more!...O! whither shall he fly,
To hide him from himself?...'Tis irksome all!...
The world, with winning tongue, invites him back,...
The siren soon rewoos him to her arms,
And, in the rapid vortex of her cares,
Again ingulfs him deep, to rise no more!
Such fickle, inconsistent things are men,
Blown, like the restless gossamer, about

n scene to scene, till some hard beating storm
ress them to the dust, from whence they sprung.
ind is essential to enjoy the scenes
naduh'rate nature. Sage divines
e oft averr'd, and frequently the theme
occupied my thoughts the reprobate,
ice admitted at the ports of light,
ere holiness and happiness abound,
ild find no joys congenial to his soul:
is with him, whose bosom is untun'd
he soft harmonies of humble life.
me...no flow'ret blooms, no zephyr breathes,
ruit, with gold or purple tinge, appears,
wakes the slumb'ring feelings of my soul,
ciating every rural bliss:
ning ostent...my heart's best chords are touch'd.

Alas! in early life, reluctant torn
From sweet Simplicity's belov'd recess;
Ne'er shall the muse forget, in plaintive strains...
'Tis all she can...to chaunt the calm delights
Of guiltless days, remember'd with regret;
And though, like Noah's dove, her foot may find
No consecrated spot...no place of rest,
Her wings shall hover o'er the landscape still,
Grateful to HIM, who gives the mind to think,
The soul to vibrate, and the heart to feel!

SCENES OF YOUTH,

&c.

ARGUMENT.

Address to Friendship. Thoughts on Society. Solitude and Retirement. Pedantry. Wedding. Christening. Funeral. Mourning. Historical Readings. Effects of false Glory on Greece, Rome, &c. Hubert's Tale. Christmas Entertainment.

BOOK II.

'RIENDSHIP! obedient to thy sacred call,
hat wakes the inmost ardors of the heart,
he Muse resumes her flight: nor you, ye gay!
'espise a lover of the tranquil shade...
'o gloomy misanthrope, no selfish carl,
lonkish recluse, or visionary wight,
.waits to scare you hence. The sable cowl,
'he scallop, and the melancholy veil,
'he cave, the cell, the dreary hermitage,

Be far away. A social creature man
Was form'd by his Creator;...form'd to bless
His like, and in his turn be doubly bless'd;
Ev'n in the charming bowers of Paradise
Could solitude not charm:...There lonely man,
Though innocent, and void of other care,
Pin'd for a help-mate meet; when heav'n approv'd
The genial wish, and granted his request.
O! spurn the dogmas of designing men,
Who dare upon the credulous impose
The chains of superstition: minds are free;
Associating only they improve,
Nor in seclusion ever can rejoice.
But oft, amid the troublous storms of life,
Retirement is a temporary calm,
That lulls the weary bosom to repose.

Ye too...who, with affected taste, can brook
Alone the boasted charms of classic song,
Once more from these familiar numbers learn,
I deck my brows with no Pierian wreath,
From dusty volumes cull'd, beneath the smoke
Of midnight lamps; but many a wild flow'r twine,
By roving Mem'ry pluck'd in fields of youth.
Did e'er ambition taste a joy so pure
As nature's children feel, amid the vale
Of humble life, when bright the cloudless sun...
Omen of long prosperity in love,...
Shines on some nuptial morn? I oft have join'd
The laughing throng, and mark'd the nubial pair,
In sabbath dress, from the parental cot
Forth issuing, jocund. First the bridegroom gay,
In coat of stainless blue, emblem approv'd

Of constancy unchanging: next the bride,
Bashful and blushing, like the unsunn'd rose,
Fresh with the sprinklings of a vernal show'r,
Hers the pure blush of modesty; not such
As pride puts on, to see itself outvied
With idle trappings, drawn from fashion's store.
Then many a gown, by honest labour earn'd,
Adorn'd with stripe, or sprig, or decent flow'r,
First saw the light, and charm'd the gazing crowd.
Friends, relatives, companions of their youth,
Assembling there, with gratulation kind,
The rustic triumph swell'd...for duty, truth,
And plain sincerity, that seldom tread
The walks of higher life, attend them still:
Nor cold formality the foe of love!
With deeds and settlements, by av'rice fram'd,

arass their peace, and damp a languid flame:
or vanity...the fool in herald's coat,
ith titles proud, and boasted pedigree,
trudes officious, or seductive leads
legal prostitution. Happier they
hom nature's kind affections only prompt
unions, not of temporary date,
iting conveniencies, or appetites,
it form'd, and wish'd, through changeful life to last:
ılike our fashionable *insect* race,
ho for a *season* pair, then *nobly* burst
ıe feeble bonds, and range, uncheck'd, at large,
ssolv'd each gen'rous vow, each tender tie,
hile dear connections blush, and shrink, abash'd,
ıd endless discords and confusions reign.
t those whose compacts shun day's searching eye,

Irreverent, beneath eve's darkling veil,
With sullen pomp, in their own mansions, raise
Th' unconsecrated altar; while around
A chosen *few* attend the joyless rite.
There, where amid the yew-tree's gloom, half hi
The ivied porch its gothic doors unfolds,
A throng of youthful rustics, eager, press,
Solicitous to gain a foremost place
Beside the chancel-rail; intent to mark
The sacred ceremonial; how the bride
Her trembling finger to the proffer'd ring
With soft reluctance yields; and how the youth,
In sweet confusion gives the sacred pledge,
While smiles and secret whispers circulate,
And many a gentle maiden-bosom heaves,
Anticipating oft...with modest wish,

v. go. Ceremony continued.

A consummation of its own pure hope:
Nor even age is absent...mindful still
Of primal days...when tender passions glow'd,
The hoary dame enjoys the hallow'd scene,
Feels in her breast reviving warmth expand,
Bends, with the surplic'd priest, the ready knee,
And joins the benediction. Hark! the bells
Strike cheerful out; and through th' enquiring vale
Proclaim the pious ceremony clos'd:
Nor cease repeated peals to cheer the swains,
With undulating swell, as slow they plod
Homeward, from daily labour, o'er the fields,
While dancing gnats swarm round their sweltry brows,
In day's departing beams, with glitt'ring wing;
Till dewy ev'ning breathes her cooler gale,

And whispers all the country to repose.

What though his lot be hard, and small his means,
Yet unrepining still the poor man sees,
Round him, his healthful family increase,
And trusts its welfare, and its hopes to heaven.

Still provident, the fond and frugal pair,
A *little stranger* annually expect...
Unanxious whether male or female, they,
For no estates they hold, that need an heir;
Or but, at most, a lowly, mud-built cot,...
Perhaps of fifty shillings yearly worth,
Including all its thorn-inclos'd demesne:
Yet o'er their *first-born* not sincerer joy
Their proud superiors feel:...Nor comes the day
Appointed for baptismal rites unwelcome,
Or unprepar'd for: 'tis a jubilee

) every branch of kindred down the vale!...
)usins of third degree must need be there;
.t chiefly those who, not a year before,
rtook the wedding cheer; and, when receiv'd
:o the bosom of the church, secure
turns the *infant Christian*, and the ale...
full month old, or choice metheglin sweet,
ancient bowl, goes round, to warm the heart
merry gossips...then their tongues are loos'd
ı themes as *sage* and *interesting* too,
those which oft engage the fluent pow'rs
senators!...But most the converse runs
ı early loves, on marriages, and births,
r generations past...at length detail'd,
ith genealogic skill; and now it turns
)on the tiny *Hero* of the feast:

Nor is there one but can distinctly trace,
In the sweet babe, some feature of its sire;
" Eyes, nose, and mouth, how like!" And e'en the
Muse
Is proud to own, *she sees the likeness* too!
For never yet Suspicion's blighting breath
Breath'd on the mother's fame. The cup goes round
The wood or turf-heap'd hearth, of ample width,
Accompanied by many a cheerful toast,
Song, jest, or toy, of undissembled love;
Till now the clock strikes nine...a late, late hour!...
A gen'ral stir succeeds...kind leave is taken,
With interchange of blessings manifold:...
The wav'ring lanthorns shine along the moor,
Across the pond, the meadow, or the field,
To guide their owners home to sweet repose,

v. 152. Funeral Processions compared.

But seldom broken through the longest night,
Though wintry tempests howl; save when, without
The village choirists, in their Christmas round,
Beneath the window chaunt, at midnight hour,
A cheerful carol, or the anthem, fraught
With joyous tidings...such as erst was heard
From seraph tongues, in unison divine,
O'er Bethlehem's field, "Glory to GOD on high!
"Peace! peace on earth; and long good will to man!"
Is there one passion of the human heart,
One natural, virtuous passion, but affords
Some sense of pleasure? No:....this calm retreat,
E'en when it echoes with the mournful knell,
Is not unsoothing. Mark the progress slow
Of yon solemnity, where, step by step,
With sober pace, the village swains convey

Continued.

Some dear departed neighbour to the tomb,
Long known, long lov'd, age, youth, and childh
come,
To swell the train, and join the genuine woe.
What, though no hireling mutes, with hackniec
Beset the fated door, and, cautious, form
The countenance to woe...seal up the lips,
And lay strict impositions on the tongue...
Though Vanity's proud car...the rumbling hear
Beneath the sable shade of nodding plumes,
Conceals not from the gazing multitude
Those ruins of mortality? No pomp
Of blazon'd scutcheons strike the eager eye,
Nor long procession of encumber'd steeds
Drag careless strangers on, or greedy heirs,
Impatient to earth up the coffin'd corse,

And grasp the hoarded gold:...Here honest truth,
Disinterested, draws around this grave,
A simple circle, anxious to attend
Their honour'd pastor's monitory voice,
As on the new-drawn mould he takes his stand,
Conspicuous; and, with energetic act,
While his white locks flow graceful on the breeze,
From Revelation's page, exhorts, conjures,...
His rustic auditory.. awe-impress'd...
By doubtful life...by time's incessant flight...
By death's sure aim...eternity's approach...
By all the joys of heav'n, and pains of hell,
To seek salvation, while one hope remains!...
A solemn period this! Here 's not a bone
Thrown up, but some one knew its owner once,
And of him still some treasur'd anecdote

Remembers well:...But see! the cords are fix'd...
Down to the gloomy "place of skulls" descends
The rumbling coffin. "Dust to dust," pronounc'd...
Anew the bursting tears, infectious, flow,
And every bosom heaves a deeper sigh.
How all climb, eager, o'er the crumbling mound,
To take a last, sad view?...On the rude lead
To read th' inscriptive nail-work...age and date...
Strew rosemary sweet, and breathe a long adieu!
  Here the survivors need no vain parade
Of sable garb, to *tell the world* they *mourn*.
Forgetful pride reflects not 'tis the mark
Of infamy...memento of th' effects
Of Adam's sin. The fashionable fool
Sighs for a mourning, as a birth-day dress;
It suits all places...revels, parks, and plays;

The church, the ball-room, and the masquerade:
'Tis *kind* then of our friends sometimes to die,
To give us opportunity to *mourn!*
To show our grace, our gravity, and love!
It is a needful and convenient farce,
Of *two* long *acts*, play'd for the *benefit*
Of those who thrive on human vanity.
By custom led, the poor, too, ape the rich,
And, reckless of expences, hardly borne,
Give to their needy creditors just cause
To mourn indeed:...tenacious of the mode,
Though penury o'er their future days impend!
Say, does no comfort soothe the kindred breast,
While ling'ring mem'ry o'er departed worth
Incessant ponders?...Yes! 'tis dear to dwell
On many an unimportant circumstance

Long dormant...now but conjur'd up again,
To rouse the soul's best feelings. O! 'tis sweet
To think that those we knew...that those we lov'd
From earliest days, sunk sweetly to repose
On the soft bed of peace...in friendship's arms,
Beneath their natal roof; and honest tears,
Spontaneous flowing round, embalm'd their dust!
Ah! how unlike the wretch's fate, who long
In crowded towns, or cities proud, immur'd,
Attains the verge of time?...In cellar damp,
Or squalid garret, lo! he breathes his last,
Unknown, unfriended! To the silent grave
Impatient hurried, by a *stranger-band*,
Who toil for wages in the work of death.
Scarce o'er the pil'd and crowded catacombs
Is spread the much-grudg'd dust, and scarce his bon

v. 247. Devastations of War.

Escape the midnight spoiler's desp'rate hand,
Though dark oblivion in its deepest shade
Absorbs his memory. But, should the Muse
Record the victims of the blood-stain'd sword,
Humanity would sicken at the song!
What nameless thousands in each dire campaign
Have sunk, in chaos lost! Devouring War!
What ruin hast thou wrought, in ev'ry age,
In ev'ry clime? From time's remotest date
To this existing hour, what ills have flow'd,
False glory, from thy source, fast rolling down,
Depopulating Nature's simple reign!
As lonely wand'ring through the woodland shade,
Or the deep silence of the corn-field path,
Half-hid amid a grove of waving ears,
What strange sensations have possess'd my mind,

As, eager, oft I turn'd th' historic page?

O GREECE! great nurse of genius, arts, and arms,
With pain I mus'd o'er thy dismember'd states,
Delug'd with blood, and urg'd, by deadliest feuds,
To acts altern of tyranny and guile:
A wondrous scene of glory and disgrace!...
What patriots, poets, orators, were thine?
Bright luminaries of succeeding times!
Here the great *Parent* of heroic song
First woke the epic strain. Hence *Pindar* rose,
On eagle wing, to proud Parnassus' height:
Here am'rous *Sappho* struck her love-taught lyre,
While the charm'd nine a *stranger-sister* own'd:
With roses crown'd, *Anacreon's* sportive muse
Dipp'd in the sparkling bowl her spangled plumes,
And swept Euphrosyne's enchanting strings

v. 279. Reflections on Greece continued.

Extatic; while thy melancholy notes,
Euripides, stole o'er the soften'd soul,
And all the melting passions sweetly thrill'd.
'Midst his own Athens mighty *Solon* fram'd
That code which aw'd the subjugated lands,
And harmoniz'd associated minds:
Here *Plato* reason'd in the studious porch;
All his soul-swaying eloquence display'd
Demosthenes:...The far-fam'd moral *Sage*,
" Wisest of men"...by oracle pronounc'd,
Lifted his noblest views to nature's God,
And fell a martyr to the lore he taught.

Line 288. ——————The low-rooft house
Of Socrates; see there his tenement,
Whom, well inspir'd, the oracle pronounc'd
Wisest of men."

MILT. Par. Reg. B. iv. l. 273.

But now the Turk, with sacrilegious hand,
Tasteless, attacks the hallow'd works of art;
Down rush the sculptur'd fanes, the columns proud
The stately portal, and the trophied arch;
The breathing statue, and the gazing bust,
With all the magic of the pencil, dipp'd
In heav'n's etherial hues!...The pomp, the boast
Of architectural pride, and skill divine.

Hence turn'd I, to behold the giant-state
Of ROME...imperial ROME! with wonder view'd
By realms sea-sever'd, and remotest isles;...
From where the sun first darts his morning ray,
To where he sinks beneath the western wave!
Blest in primeval days, when *Numa* sway'd
The regal sceptre, ere a despot vile
Disgrac'd the *kingly* name, supreme she shone,

v. 317. Fate of the Roman Empire.

Innoxious to the world: and later still,
Hale from the plough her bold dictators sprung,
Snatch'd the bright steel, and sought th'avenging fight,
Where'er oppression rear'd its tyrant crest:...
As nobly then retir'd: till bared her sword
Accurst Ambition; and the ruthless hand
Of wanton Pow'r grasp'd, with insatiate aim,
At universal domination. Then,
O'er fields of blood, the Roman eagle cowr'd,
While grim Destruction whirl'd his crimson car
O'er prostrate Justice, Innocence, and Truth!
Till on the bloated empire's monstrous bulk
Descends the northern storm.....Goths, Vandals,
Huns,
Their iron squadrons join, and from their holds
Impenetrable, snow-clad, ice-bound climes,

United, pour. Down sink her loftiest tow'rs,
Virtue no more her sacred senate shields;
Her guardian *Genius* leaves her to her fate;
To baneful Superstition's gloomy arts,
The wiles of priestcraft, and the scorn of fools!
A dreadful picture this!...and faithful too!...
These are thy works, O War!...To thee we owe
The wasting flames that ravage neighbour lands,
When lordly man has wanted room to move
With Pride and Pow'r; and lawless Av'rice stretch'd
An envious hand to grasp another's right.
I would not be the conqueror of a world,
To own such spoils, and boast a despot's praise!

Line 331. "By such ideas as these, we ought to correct the impression made upon our minds by the undue praises of some historians, and the sentiments of many, deceived by false images of greatness." ROLLIN'S Anc. Hist.

Led like a muzzled bear about the land,
For fools to gaze at! while Humanity
Abhorr'd the sight! Nor have I touch'd a string
That ere can vibrate on a virtuous ear
Discordant...'tis a *guilty fame* alone
I reprobate...not unaware that man,
Plac'd in this militant, precarious state,
Must move, an active agent, still expos'd
To know commotion, and experience ill;
But woe to those by whom such evils come!
Nor would I pluck one laurel from the brows
Of British heroes...they have earn'd it well,
And may they wear it long! The civic wreath
Too, not unfrequently, they justly claim.
Courage and mercy, happily conjoin'd,

Line 343. Imitation of Matthew, c. xviii. v. 7.

Continued.

Beam in transparent splendor through each eye
Warm the swoll'n breast, and animate the heart
Oft in the breach what has the soldier dar'd,
To shield his comrade from contending swords,
Thick flashing on the sight?...The sailor what?.
When hideous round the mingled tempest howl
And yawning billows form'd a thousand graves!
Oft have those cliffs, of tow'ring height sublime
That guard our coast, and grace our SHAKSPEA
song,
When distant signals of distress were heard,
And dismal wrecks the foaming surge bestrew'd
Witness'd such deeds of matchless hardihood
As would have made the circling blood recoil!
Nor ev'n their foes have stretch'd their arms in v

Line 356. Cliffs of Dover, &c.

In danger's hour, when Death, tremendous, strode
Around their thund'ring fleets. Then Pity's voice
Pleaded, with accent sweet, the wretch's cause,
Whose gasping form scarce floated on the wave!
Yes, great and gallant men! your country owes
To you a boundless debt of gratitude!...
To you, next heaven, each blessing she enjoys!
By you protected, sweeter are the charms
Of social life...the vernal prospects shine
With brighter hues!...more rich th' autumnal fields!...
Bolder the broad-arm'd oaks, that shade her hills;
And, prouder still, the rocks, that bound her reign!
Oh! what delight has caught my ardent breast,
While yet a child, to sit beside the fire,
That crackled through the faggot on the hearth...
Or on the bank, beneath the maple hedge,

While humming bees sung round the poppy bed
Attending keen a hoary veteran's tale...
That veteran HUBERT was, nobly dismiss'd
With honourable mention, after years
Of gallant service. As he bar'd his breast...
And show'd the seamy scars...the register
Of many battles...oft would he recount
Each circumstance of every action, where
Those dreadful characters were deep inscrib'd:
Would paint the ground-plot, where encamp'd lay,
With nice precision; and, upon the earth,
With black-thorn staff, mark out the various form
And dispositions of preparing hosts,
In column, line, or squadron: where the drum,
First thund'ring aweful, gave the signal-roll

Of flaming volleys, till, o'er all the field,
Beneath its smokey cope, the battle burn'd!
Then would he point me to the country round,
And say..." At such a hill, on such a place,
" The foe was posted: there the horse appear'd,
" And here the foot, more num'rous far than ours;
" For why...one English arm can singly quell
" At least *five Frenchmen*, be they ne'er so brave!
" A valley lay betwixt us, and a wood,
" Around whose gloomy skirts the cannon roar'd,
" With dreadful execution!...There," he cried...
" I first receiv'd a wound; yet, nought dismay'd,
" When the long line gave way, I foremost join'd
" The fierce pursuit, while all the steep ascent
" Was cover'd with the less'ning multitudes,
" Or with the dying, and the dead, bestrew'd."

Nor would he fail to number up the slain,
And comment on the merits of the dead;
Lavish of praise on ev'ry name he lov'd,
O'er lost companions heave a deep-felt sigh,
And swell his tale with all their bold exploits;
For, though a soldier, still his heart was warm,
And prone to feel:...'twas honest and sincere,
Mov'd by each impulse, gen'rous or humane,
True to its friend, its country, and its king.
Oft too he lesson'd me to march erect,
With stately step; the stiff inverted toe
And stooping gait reprov'd, and gave the word
Authoritative; while each passenger
Would stop to gaze, and smile, perchance, to see
His pupil watch each motion of the hand,
To *shoulder* or *present*, with rustic sleight,

v. 426. Christmas Mumming. Its Effects.

The ashen billet; liberally repaid
With commendation...Vanity's frail meed!...
And...such the inconsistencies of youth!...
Anticipating manhood, thus I breath'd...
"No other than a soldier's life be mine!"
Nor yet forgotten be the festive eve,
To pageant mummeries dedicated still,
When *Father Christmas* to the neighbours round
His annual visit paid, in garb grotesque;
While, as he crack'd his merry jokes, and shook
His long white beard, the huddling children crept
Close to the mother's chair, and sought to hide
Beneath her apron blue each chubby face.
Prepar'd the way...behold a glitt'ring train;
In Sunday's best apparel, richly lac'd
Down ev'ry seam with paper, gold-emboss'd;

Of paper too aloft their ensign waves...
Their helmets shine with nodding plumes adorn'd,
Pluck'd from the barn-door cock, or turkey's tail;
With swords of wood, or lances, trembling white,
The peasant champions onward proudly stride,
With awkward gait, and mouth bombastic strains,
Expressive of defiance, daring loud
To single combat every bold compeer.
Foremost, *St. George of England*...he who slew
The venom'd dragon...shakes his dreaded lance:
Th' *Egyptian Soldan*, and the *Norman Prince*...
The *Roman Soldier*, and the *Turkish Knight*
Come next, exulting in their proud exploits;
With others, of inferior name and note,
But not less vaunting of heroic deeds.
Out fly their swords! the clatt'ring fight begins;

v. 474. Christmas Gambols continued.

With many a little bosom anxious heaves,
To mark the dire event. Fast drop around
The vanquish'd combatants, with quiv'ring limbs;
And soon the red-brick floor is all bestrew'd
With *bloodless* carcases, which mimic death,
Cautious, with eyes shut up, and breath repress'd;
While o'er the fatal field of battle stalks
The doughty victor, insolently vain,
And, wrapt in self-importance, slow retires.
Caught with the pomp and splendor of the scene,
Then would my kindled passions glow anew
With martial ardour, emulous of fame,
By judgment uncorrected....Such, too oft,
The Muse suspects, in nobler bosoms reign,
Prelusive to those sanguinary storms,
That waste mankind, and wrap the world in woe!

O! ne'er may notions of *false glory* fire
The undelib'rate heart! 'Tis madness all.
'Tis more than madness, in the frenzied hour,
To plunge in human blood; to draw the gore,
Warm streaming from the wounds of innocence,
When Justice disavows the cause. Forbear,
Intemp'rate hero, undeceiv'd; for, know,
Who fights alone for glory, ne'er shall wear
The spotless laurel; latest time shall brand
With infamy his name; the gen'ral curse
Of injur'd nations on his head shall light:
And baleful wreaths shall wither on his brow!

SCENES OF YOUTH,

&c.

ARGUMENT.

View of former Days, Bull-baiting. Spanish and Portuguese Bull-fights. Moral Observations. Cock-fighting, &c. Rural Sports. Charity Schools, Sunday Schools, &c. Observations of the Sabbath. Village Matron. Comparisons between Art and Nature.

BOOK III.

ENOUGH of war! of mad ambition too
Enough!...My country! never may thy shades
Resound their clamours; never may thy plains
Be drench'd with foreign or domestic blood!
Forbid it, Heav'n, such days should e'er return
As those of which our fathers oft have told!
When on our shores, from many a barb'rous realm,
The Gothic legions pour'd, that dearly won
Possession, long contested, at the point

Traits of ancient Wars.

Of rude-wrought spears, with native firmness c
While ev'ry woad-stain'd bosom, bare and bra
Glow'd, patriotic, in the gen'ral cause.
Such were the naked bands, that Cæsar saw
Down rushing, furious, from their natal hills,
And deep, dark woods, of venerable oak,
The Druids' sacred haunts; and such the arm
That struck, with sudden awe, the Roman pri
In latter days, what conflicts dire have sprui
From civil feuds!...The white rose and the red
Have blush'd alike with blood; and scarce a sv
The stranger meets, but, on the dusty down,
Or fallow field, can readily point out
Vast mould'ring trenches, deck'd with nibbling

Line 19. The bloody contests for succession betwe
Houses of York and Lancaster.

v. 24. Wonder of the Peasantry on turning up gigantic Bones.

Straggling in narrow tracks from height to height,
Where hostile armies lay; or barrows green,
Oft from whose excavated sides are drawn
Fragments of armour, urns, and crumbling bones
Of size gigantic, which, with wond'ring mien,
The labourer, leaning o'er his spade, surveys,
And peasant youth, on leisure interval,
Sabbath, or holiday, from neighb'ring farm,
Or cottage, troop to see; while various tales
Traditional, pass round, with rev'rence heard,
And long, with due solemnity, retain'd.
Such monuments of other times appear
In frequent view, o'er DORSET's far-stretch'd downs...

Line 26. Vast numbers of these hillocks, known by the name of *barrows*, are to be seen on most of the downs in the West of England.

My native soil...that throw a length of shade,
When the broad sun descends;...and oft have fill'd
My mind with awful musings: while grey haze
Settled upon the landscape's distant line,
And gradual wrapt me in congenial gloom.
Thanks to th' ALMIGHTY arm which guards our coast
From restless foes, that thunder o'er the deep!
Thanks to the mercy-breathing voice divine,
Which hush'd the tempest of intestine war,
And bade us in our softest shades repose!
O! ne'er again, while lours the gath'ring storm,
May wayward faction, in the perilous hour,
Delude the public mind: though evil men,

Line 48. In allusion to the prevalence of the most inconsistent revolutionary principles during the late war.

With specious argument, the easy faith
Of partizans persuade...Britons, beware
Their plausive lore! for those who, merely fond
Of *innovation*, to a foreign foe
Would tamely render up a nation's rights,
With hope of better days; or fain would thrive
Upon their country's spoils...O! cautious shun
Their sordid lure and despicable arts!
But, hark! what means that uproar? Still it spreads
From hill to hill; on ev'ry breeze is heard
The shrieks of children, hurried female screams,
The youth's loud clamours, and the brutal shout
Of multitudes, in fierce pursuit engag'd;
As when an arm'd banditti, from the caves
Of parch'd Arabia, eager for the spoil,

Assails the dust-envelop'd caravan,
To Mecca bound...or conqu'ring army, bent
To sack some rich, devoted town...so loud
Ascend the sounds of riot and misrule....
Denote not these the storm of civil war...
Its consternation, terror, and dismay?
Behold the cause! The chieftain of the herd...
The lordly *Bull*, impatient of his wrongs,
Bursts from his stake, and, threat'ning wounds and death,
Turns on his persecutors, who have arm'd
His brows with alien horns, and urg'd him sore
With mastiffs, fiercest of the canine breed,
Whose iron jaws, insatiate with blood,

Line 75. It is customary, in some remote villages, to affix false horns to those of the bull, to prevent injury to the dogs.

v. 3a. Bull-baiting continued.

Have gash'd with ghastly wounds his ebon nose
And reeking dew-lap. Terrible he drives
Amid the stagger'd crowd: some, stumbling, fall
Beneath his trampling hoofs, in gore and mire
Deform'd; while others, whirl'd in air aloft,
With tatter'd garb, and crippled limb descend.
A stagnant pond at length arrests his eye,
When deep he plunges in the sordid wave.
Immers'd above his smoking flank, he stands:
His big heart labours in his swelling breast,
And vengeance lours upon his sable front.
Once more, entangled in the treach'rous noose,
Again to cruel torture see him led
With stern reluctance! like the crest-fall'n chief,
Chain'd to some haughty victor's conqu'ring car:
The much-scar'd multitudes, that stood aloof,

Forget their fears, and, hast'ning, rally round:
They form a living lane...The bridled dogs
Let slip, low-crouching, rush upon their prey:
As cautious, oft th' insulted animal,
With level'd horns...the weapons of his wrath...
Amid their shouting masters, headlong, hurls
His sprawling foes; sometimes, with outstretch arms
Receiv'd..but oft'ner dash'd upon the ground,
Bloody and maim'd, and doom'd through life to lim
With hanging jaws, deep-scarr'd, and fractur'd rib
Now Vict'ry shifts her side...fresh troops appear
And soon the hostile beast his proud knee bends,
Fast pinion'd by the sanguine enemy,
Hook'd in his lip, and draining life-warm blood.
He wields his tufted tail, and lashes hard

His ample sides; while from his hollow throat
Deep groans ascend:...He trembling sinks, subdued,
While all around the shouts of triumph swell,
And hubbub loud; and each succeeding scene
Is blasphemy, confusion, and debauch!
Are these the pastimes gen'rous Britons boast!
Sanction'd by laws, that wond'ring realms admire!
In darker days, by jealous states contriv'd
To exercise the public mind, that else
Might speculate on their nefarious deeds,
And plots of crafty courtiers...who would check
The growth of intellect,...dam up the springs
Of knowledge, and obstruct fair Reason's ray;
For why should vulgar minds presume to *think*?
Enough for vile plebeians to submit
To servitude, chain'd to the mighty will

Of despot pow'r, nor daring to complain,
Or question proud authority supreme.
Thus argued statesmen, absolute, of old:
Though, when they first devis'd the savage sports,
Thessalian tyrants call'd their youth around
Professedly t' inure the noble heart
To warlike exercise, and deeds of blood;
From thence to Rome imperial Cæsar brought
The barbarous pastime; still transmitted down
To rich *Hesperia*, and the *Lusian* realm;
Hence, in the arts of cruelty refin'd,
The vain *Leïrian* boasts his bull-feasts proud.
Inspir'd by beauty's bright approving smile,
Amid the fam'd arena, lo! he dares
The dang'rous combat. Terrible, the foe
Issues, abrupt, from long and dark restraint,

To madness press'd; his famish'd sides bestuck
With rankling shafts, and tubes with nitrous dust,
Combustible, replenish'd; touch'd by fire,
He moves involv'd in hissing, crackling flame.
From his spread nostrils sulph'rous flakes respire,
nhaled in bellowing anguish: burn his eyes
Vith vengeful fury! Long, with desp'rate hoof,
Ie plunges fierce, and rends the yielding soil;
ill, all exhausted, the tormentor's steel,
a savage mercy, rids him of his pangs;
Vhile, to her hero, some ambitious dame,
mid the plaudits of a soulless host,
)eigns to present a *hand* without a *heart!*
O! my fair countrywomen! kinder, you

Line 152. This account of the Leïrian bull-fight, according) Mr. Murphy, a well informed traveller, is literally correct.

Reflection on Cock-fighting.

Ask no such proofs of prowess, though your cl
Might vie with all the boast of elder time;
Of manners gentle, and of morals chaste,
Though at your shrines the proudest conqu'ror
And deathless poets celebrate your fame.

How can enlighten'd Britons lend their smil
When the bold bird, that wakes the lab'ring hi
At peep of morn...by rude abettors arm'd
With murd'rous steel...is on to battle urg'd,
Where death or victory waits? More cruel sti
At Shrovetide, or the wake's licentious hour,
Unfeeling clowns oft, to the destin'd stake,
Confine the flutt'ring victim, doom'd to fall
Beneath the brutal aim of batt'ring staves,
With broken limbs, and golden feathers steep'
In gushing gore! Are these the festive game

That form to manly valour?...Then, indeed,
The Indian chief, who to the torture leads
His wretched captives, must be truly great!
Are these the men, whose high heroic acts
Shall do their country honour?...Firm of soul,
With gen'rous fortitude, that knows not fear,
Say, do they wield in war a braver sword
Than the bold Scot, in calm religious life,
Patient of hardship bred,...whose pow'rful arm,
On Egypt's hostile plains, subdued the pride
Of legions, term'd *Invincible;* o'eraw'd
The insolence of fortune; while the Turk,
Rous'd from despondency, astonish'd, saw
His country rescued from the Gallic yoke?
Ye, who can feel, assume the right to *think;*
And be no more the dupes of sophistry

That fain would vindicate those barb'rous modes,
And savage customs, which disgrace our land!
Those are the schools, where ductile minds may learn
The *noblest* rudiments of gross debauch!
Initiated in cruelty and blood,
Here young assassins may their lessons take,
To fit them for the blackest scenes of vice,
In riper life;...of innate courage void,
But bold enough, in some advent'rous hour,
To dare the very gibbet they'll degrade.
Are there not sports, as brave, and more humane,
To form the minds to intrepidity,
The nerves to toil?...Lo! on the open down
Assemble, joyous, from the flail and plough,
Th' athletic youth....pride of the hamlets round:....

Arm'd with elastic bats, in order rang'd,
Each, at his post, displays his brawny limbs,
Of mould Herculean; now, with nervous arm,
He hurls the whizzing ball, or, firm, repels;
Scarce swifter through the yielding ether flies,
From the deep cannon's throat, the hissing globe,
That spreads destruction o'er th' embattled field.

Yon, the tall May-pole rear'd upon the beach,
Invites the villagers; from the green hills
The fresh flow'rs breathe, and all the outspread main
Is gently brush'd by the descending breeze,
While up the slope the constant billows turn
Soft rushing sands, that shift along the shore,
With soothing murmur on the list'ning ear.
Such, *Portland*, is the scene thy steepy cliffs
O'erlook; while all thy hardy sons around,

Spread their black nets upon the sunny ridge,
Whence many a boat at intervals is launch'd,
And wing'd with oars: when mack'rel shoals arrive,
Dark'ning the deep, the seiners shoot away,
And while, in ample curve, they sweep the flood,
Labour, and gain, and pastime, all unite.
'Tis *holiday*....and e'en the village school
Pours out its little inmates....noisy, wild,
And void of care; from toilsome task releas'd,
And tongue of lecturing dame; and, happier still,
From dread of birchen rod, terrific shook
High o'er the doltish head. They shout, they leap,
And, in the fervour of tumultuous joy,
Forget their humble meal, neglected left,
Unpack'd, in tiny basket....Free, they stroll,
In straggling parties, as caprice directs,

v. 233. Hurling the Sledge.

But each on pleasure bent....the aim of man,
From earliest childhood to his latest hour!....
Some seek the covert of the flow'ring furze,
Where crimson-breasted linnets, twitt'ring, range;
Others, intent, around the bramble brake,
Pluck blackberries ripe, to stain their sunburnt cheeks,
Or, idling, stretch them on the arid soil,
Where scatter'd mole-hills, blue with scented thyme,
Diversify the scene. The sturdy smith,
With horny hands, and apron round him furl'd,
Brings forth his sledge, and, long assaying, swings,
With motion pendulous; at length discharg'd
Aloft in air, the pond'rous iron flies,
And ploughs the distant turf, as wider spreads
Th' astonish'd circle....till some vet'ran swain,
Famous for feats of strength, with conscious pride,

Steps boldly forth, and challenges his peers;
And, still, while each the contest scorns to yield,
Long, undecided, lasts the manly strife.

The shepherd-boy throws off his cumbrous scri
Pitches the hurdle on the verdant slope,
And dares his sprightly comrades to the leap;
While, in the shade, their trusty dogs repose,
Or guard from pilf'ring curs their homely crust

Some in the race, with fleetest foot, engage,
Of hob-nail'd shoes divested: round the goal,
Dext'rous, they wheel; and happy he who gains,
Foremost, the bush or tree; where, tempting, hang
Whip, gloves, or snow-white frock, or ribbons gay,
Which, on next Sabbath, shall adorn the breast
Of her, whose love the ruddy victor boasts.

But last, and worthiest of the rural lay,

v. 265. Ploughing Match.

A match of skill, long pending, draws around
The rival ploughmen, emulous to guide
The share, unerring, o'er the level soil.
With braided mane, and front with boughs adorn'd,
E'en their deep-chested horses, strong and sleek,
Toss their high heads, instinctively, and seem
To share the triumph, when the gen'ral voice
To him, whose plough the straightest furrow draws,
Decrees the prize....fair pig, or sable lamb,
The firstling of the flock, companion long
Of many a little cottager; and train'd
To eat the crust from ev'ry friendly hand;
While babes, familiar, strok'd his cheerful face,
Patted his curly back, and shar'd his love.
The next in merit, likewise, claims reward,
Of humbler value, sky-blue hose, or hat,

With silver edge, long worn at intervals
Of ease or leisure....festival or fair....
In proud remembrance of th' exploits of youth.
These are not pastimes, which the most severe
Need censure, or condemn; no breach is here
Of law, divine or human; no reproach
To rigid virtue; much unlike the games
Sanction'd by vice: no profanation this
Of solemn seasons, as prevail'd whilere,
When servile priestcraft, lax of morals, gave
Licence to stain, with dissipation lewd,
The Christian Sabbath, 'neath the auspices

Line 292. The Book of Sports, allowed after eve prayers, on Sundays, was read in the churches by ord James I. in 1607; and those clergymen who refuse comply, were ejected.

Of easy monarchs, leaning to its cause.

With all th' improving follies of our age,

We show some traits of virtue, which our sires

Ne'er knew....some marks of public spirit, still,

To serve succeeding ages; and to prove....

Like the brave Grecians, in their prosp'rous days,

When wise Lycurgus watch'd the common weal,..

Our children are the children of the state.

Religion, too, rejoices, while she sees

Her champions, zealous, rise on ev'ry side,

From the proud city to the rustic shades,

To chase the clouds of ignorance, and throw

The sun-beams of instruction o'er the mind

Of humble poverty. The task is thine,

Fair CHARITY! to draw, from haunts obscure,

Each little train, pacing at service hour,

Praise due to Founders of them.

Attir'd in decent garb, along the green
Towards the village church. In order, first,
Appear the ruddy boys; the blooming girls,
Wholesome and clean, with looks demurely
Come next; and each, beneath her arm, con
A valued Bible; and there are who deign
Profit, and ease, and pleasure to forego,....
Though Fortune woos them still, with all her
To form, with patient care, the tender minds
Of orphans, or the offspring of the poor,
But honest, hind, who claim, from weekly to
This respite sole; nor lower scorn to stoop,
From vicious parents, and example vile,
To snatch their little objects, else foredoom'
To waste this hallow'd day in play profane,
Strangers to ev'ry duty....Now no more

In vulgar habits grovelling, they are taught
To lisp each catachetical response;
From revelation's page to cull the stores
Of sacred wisdom; and to glad the hearts
Of those who seek their welfare. Still pursue,
Ye wise, enlighten'd few! your godlike toils,
By sect or party aims alike unsway'd,
And, in your grateful country's name, accept
The Muses's thanks....a temporary boon....
Till that bright hour shall come, when HE, you serve,
Shall give a nobler, and a full reward!
  Sweet is the day of rest, to those whose lot
Is constant toil....I knew a matron once,
Whose conscientious care, on previous eve,
Left nought of needful housewifery undone;
Nor aught that might to comfort due conduce,

On that important period of repose.
Bright shone the pewter round her cleanly shelves,
And bright each brazen ornament below....
Capacious kettle, or broad warming-pan,
Whose lid, with figures wrought, attracts the eye
Of envious neighbours....Scour'd the ancient board,
Of pond'rous oak, or carv'd joint-stool appear'd....
Each article in order meet arrang'd,
No spot unseemly stain'd her smooth brick-floor,
Ruddy and cool: nor e'en a weed without,
Or blade of grass, along the beaten path,
Beneath her wall, or round her door had place:
The elder too, that at her window peep'd,
Gave to her pruning knife its juicy shoots,
Nor dar'd obstruct the beams of welcome light,
Which much she needed, when from toil reliev'd,

A. 357. Sunday reading recollected.

Compos'd, upon the bench, she sat her down
And op'd her Bible. 'Twas a sacred treat
To me, at intervals of duty, then....
While my gay comrades idly rang'd the fields,
To pluck wild fruits or rob the destin'd nest....
Curious to trace each fair emblazon'd print,
Illustrative of high heroic acts,
That shine distinguish'd in the hallow'd page.
Sooth'd with the stillness of this calm retreat,
While not a sound disturb'd the deep serene,
Save that of blue-fly circling round the room,
Or struggling up the pane, with drowsy hum,
There I enjoy'd the allegoric dreams
Of faithful BUNYAN; with his pilgrim walk'd
In perilous paths; the roaring lions pass'd;
Beheld his conflict with th' infernal foe,

Apollyon; and attended, step by step,
Through Death's dark valley, to the realms of light—
Oft too, by HERVEY'S glitt'ring theme allur'd,
I rov'd, insatiate, o'er the gayest scenes
That Nature boasts; and trac'd her mystic hand,
In ev'ry bursting bud, and cultur'd flow'r,
That scents the garden round, when summer smiles;
Soar'd in blue ether's starry wilds aloft,
Or trod the darksome regions of the tomb.
Then first acquainted with thy matchless work,
Immortal MILTON! never can this heart
Forget the bounding transports which it felt....
As when the soul, from mortal bonds releas'd,
Launches amid th' illimitable space,
Ten thousand wonders bursting on her view....
Amazement seiz'd me!....all around appear'd

Beauty and light, and dread magnificence,...
A new creation!...Ere my infant pow'rs
Were equal yet to grasp the vast design,
Read, and ponder'd....and, at ev'ry pause,
Drank inspiration, knowledge, and delight!
For not alone to those of higher hopes
'Is giv'n to taste the intellectual joys;
The peasant tastes them in the lowliest vale,
Far from the clamours of the letter'd race,
Who haunt the banks of Isis, Thames, or Cam:...
But, know, I mean not, rashly, to asperse
Their *Learning*....much I reverence her name,
And much I love her sons....to whom I owe
My dearest pleasures yet. 'Tis pedantry
That stirs my indignation....proud to build
A airy edifice on others fame,

And call the work its own....wild wand'ring still
From Nature's track, in quest of glitt'ring toys,
To deck its brows....affecting to despise
Simplicity and Truth. Poets there are,
And painters too, nurs'd in this idle school,
Whose pens and pencils observation yet
Never directed; but whose teeming brains
Engender all the hetrogeneous tribe
That blot the canvas, and disgrace the page!
I blame not Fancy....sister of the Muse!
Forbid it, Genius! Much I love her name....
But let her range and reign within her sphere.
Ye candid few, whose lib'ral hearts have felt
The calm felicities of rustic life,
To you I trust my *cause*, and *rambling strain*,
For vindication. If experience sweet

twenty of the happiest years of time,
cottages, in heath, mead, forest, spent,
in give pretension to description just,
ell might I claim the humble privilege
cheer me with a retrospective lay.
Desirous oft to fix upon my heart
aces of things that *were*....but *are* no more...
ius, pleas'd and warm'd, I sit me down to sketch
me little picture of the well-known vale:
the fore-ground, my native cot I raise;
ere stands the orchard, gurgling in whose shade
e riv'let wanders:....Yonder waves an elm...
stump...a stone is here:...there runs the road,
here hangs a shatter'd gate, but seldom pass'd
cart, or bell-team; while the long rank grass
d nettles, rarely check'd by grinding wheels,

Shoot up in ev'ry rut....The work is done!...
Th' *original* vanishes; but, fair impress'd,
The *picture* still remains!...Anon, methinks,
I hear the rural sounds...the carter's horn...
The shepherd's whistle...bleatings of the fold,...
At shear-time, or the shut of eve...the low
Of distant cows...the constant-thumping flail...
The cawing rooks...the poultry's mingled notes,...
And the shrill tinklings of the brazen pan,
In van of swarming bees. Then I compare
The simple *whole* with cities, smoke-involv'd,
In tumult drown'd, with madd'ning cares convuls'd;
And sigh to mark the diff'rence! Trivial things,
Indeed, are those that lead me ling'ring far,
Yet e'en ambition shall not fail to own,
From things like those the wealth of nations spring:

From things like those our dearest comforts flow:
The patriarchs lov'd them, when the world was young,
And still, for ev'ry philosophic mind,
They boast a charm, and constitute a *mode*
That ne'er can cloy the undegen'rate taste:
Though art's delusive fashions pass away,
And lux'ry sweeps proud cities from their base,
Nature shall work the same, from age to age,
Till systems cease, and time shall be no more!

EDWARD AND JOSCELIN:

AN ECLOGUE*.

* The Eclogues of our greatest poets represent their piping swains in a sitting or recumbent posture; but this, at least, has the novelty of changing the position of the speakers, and might be called a walking Eclogue.

EDWARD AND JOSCELIN.

BENEATH the umbrage of a stunted thorn,
Round which the sheep a barren space had worn,
Fast to whose trunk, by browzing cattle scarr'd,
The ragged fragments of the fleece adher'd,
In museful mood, the weary Joscelin lay,
And mark'd the glories of the setting day;
Nigh, on his left, his well-bound load was thrown,
And, on his right, the crooked furze-bill shone.
Behind the swelling western hill, half-hid,
The sinking sun its yellowest lustre shed,

O'er the long-skirted woods and bushy down,
With the fierce droughts of scorching summer brow
Among the speary bents no cool breeze play'd,
Nor stirr'd, with softest wing, the slender blade,
When in full prospect of the gazing swain,
On the white road, that winds along the plain,
A toiling trav'ller moved, with crippled pace,
And t'wards his lone retirement turn'd his face;
His back a knapsack bore, and, far behind,
His length'ning shade show'd how the day declin'd
Though chang'd by hardships much, as near he dre
Joscelin in him a long-lost neighbour knew:
With hearty clap, they join their honest hands,
Ere either, thus, th' eventful tale demands.

JOSCELIN.

And is this Ned...in troth! and can it be...

hom we expected never more to see!..

EDWARD.

ınk God, 'tis him...once more in safety come,

ıhare the blessings of his native home;

ramblıng tir'd; by long experience wise,

v well he knows the quiet life to prize.

JOSCELIN.

ıe sit thee down...I lend my eager ear,

history of thy seven last years to hear.

EDWARD.

Joscelin;...rather let me lift thy load...

will converse along the homeward road;

see, the sun has his last beams withdrawn,

ev'ning shadows deepen o'er the lawn,

larks, descending, sink their notes' full swell,

drop in covert of the grassy dell;

Besides, O! couldst thou feel how much I long
To sit me down my family among!...
But thou canst ease one anxious doubt, and tell
If my poor infants and my wife are well.

JOSCELIN.

Conceiving now that hopes and tears are vain,
As well as woe has left them, they remain:
For, at last shearing-supper, it was said,
That thou beneath the silent turf wast laid;
And it was so believ'd the village through;
For, one dull morning, ere the first cock crew,
As thy poor Mary, sad and sleepless, lay,
To wait the op'ning of the hazy day,
While sweet her thoughtless children slumber'd round,
Unconscious of their mother's deep heart-wound,
Amid the silence, three low sighs she heard,

nd on the wall a pale blue light appear'd;
low howl'd the dog, with long and dismal note;
he death-portending screech-owl op'd his throat:...
old ran her blood...yet, down her muffled face,
ike peas, the sweat-drops roll'd, with rapid pace!
hese were the first sad words she next day spoke...
Edward is dead! and my poor heart is broke!"
burning fever in succession came;
nd long, delirious, she on Edward's name,
nwearied, call'd....

EDWARD.

And is she...is she gone!
nd are my children friendless and alone?
r do they in a wretched poor-house mourn,
opeless of comfort or of my return!....

JOSCELIN.

Ho, Ned! cheer up! these tears of weakness spare,
Thou formerly with fortitude could'st bear
The ills of life; and, all thy hardships past,
Dost thou thus play the sniv'ling fool at last?
Forbear awhile...and let an old friend know
What 'twas that made thee for a soldier go.

EDWARD.

'Tis for my follies, Joscelin, now I mourn,
And justly this hard heart is pierc'd in turn;
For my unkindness, in an evil hour,
Wrung her fond bosom, whom I thus deplore.
'Twas in my cups, at that accursed fair,
Where war's parade engross'd the gen'ral stare,
Witless I stood agape, with mute surprise,
And hearken'd to the prating serjeant's lies,

Who call'd the fuddling bumpkins round to come,
And see his guineas dance upon the drum.
"These shall be yours," he cried, "whose noble soul,
Nor home's fond ties, nor coward fears controul;
This...this is glory's road! Come dauntless on,
And bowls of punch shall drown your cares;...anon
Each bold recruit...'*Britannia Rules*'...shall sing,
And, in replenish'd bumpers, drink...'*The King*.'
Who, to domestic ills, would live a slave,
When gold and honours wait upon the brave?"...

JOSCELIN.

Stay...turn we to the right...and o'er this stile...
This will abridge our journey half a mile.

EDWARD.

Well...now again *to arms* the drummer beat...
My bounding heart did stroke for stroke repeat.

His raw recruits press'd round, whose brown hats bore
Such favours as they never knew before!
To march, with hob-nail'd shoes, they much assay'd,
And grinn'd to think what progress they had made.
Fair stream'd the flag...and on this serjeant's tongue,
Good-nature, humour, and persuasion hung...
For I had tippled with him, long and late,
Till drink and vanity had turn'd my pate,
While, as he grew more free, and I more mellow,
I dubb'd the knave a down-right *honest* fellow,
Nor mark'd the arch, sly wink, nor could believe
How the trapanner snigger'd in his sleeve.
"In truth," *says I*, "this is a charming life!"
So I forgot friends, family, and wife,
Pot-valiant then, the maudlin idiot took
Their proffer'd shilling, and at once forsook

His sober joys. This was the fatal stroke
That stabb'd her peace, and Mary's kind heart broke!
Then say, deserve I not each curse, and more
Than I have suffer'd on a foreign shore?
And dost thou wonder that my tears should flow,
When I have caus'd so much domestic woe?

JOSCELIN.

'Tis true, the poor are in a piteous state,
And parishes are burthen'd much of late:
But still 'tis hop'd, as war and bloodshed end,
The case will alter, and the times will mend.
Come now, we see the smoke by slow degrees
Mount in light curls above the orchard trees,
Sure sign the housewives have prepar'd their fires,
And hungry children wait their hungry sires,
To sit them down around the steaming board,

At least with wholesome vegetables stor'd.

EDWARD.

Ah, friend! 'tis many a long and tedious day,
Since last we jogg'd together on this way...
But where's the hut that stood beside this gate?
And where's the hind, that own'd this still retreat?
Where cakes and ale, at ev'ry merry tide,
Refreshment to the passenger supplied?
Here rosy children play'd from morn to night,
Whose little service claim'd the horseman's mite;
The gate they open'd, to prevent delay,
And ran before, to point him out his way.

JOSCELIN.

Why, man, I'll tell thee...Benjamin is dead,
And poor dame Sarah shares his clay-cold bed.
Since this, the Squire's proud heir....who wants *his* grace...

v. 140. Report concerning Edward's Death.

Has disinherited their honest race...
Inclos'd the lands....oppress'd each useful clown,
And turn'd the suff'ring country upside down.
Now I've resolv'd thee...and, in turn, request
The tale of woes that labours in thy breast:
Tell me of foreign lands, where thou hast been,
And all the bloody wars thine eyes have seen;
For we have heard that thou hast view'd the strand
Where Moses led the Israelitish band,
Of which we read:...and, it was likewise said,
That there, while many a bold youth low was laid,
Thou nobly fought'st....the foremost of the brave!
And in the sandy desart found'st a grave.
This was the cruel news, believ'd, and rife,
That prey'd upon the spirits of thy wife.

Feelings on the Death of Abercrombie. v. 154.

EDWARD.

Oh! say no more! for I could better bear
Again my ev'ry former toil and care:...
No bayonet....no ball....no Arab dart,
Was e'er so formidable to my heart
As these thy words....This bosom is not steel,
Nor need the soldier be asham'd to *feel*.
Amid the fire of battle I have known
Soft Pity weep, and kind Affection groan;
On Alexandria's heights warm tears were shed,
When there our gallant *Abercrombie* bled;
My own fresh, yawning wounds were all forgot,
While flow'd my sorrows o'er that fatal spot.

JOSCELIN.

Thou gen'rous soul!...Good heav'n thy life defend!
'Twere pity thou shouldst ever want a friend:

Were all men honest, kind, and true, like thee,
Why what a Paradise this world would be!

EDWARD.

Thou flatter'st me....have I been good or kind?...
Friendship, they say, like Love, is always blind:...
No!...I have been a poor, deluded man;
But since my race of folly I began,
With diff'rent eyes I've view'd the human heart,
And oft, in truth's disguise, discover'd art!
Little dost thou of crowds and cities know,
Where, as the tender virtues harden'd grow,
Spurning the ties of neighbour, friend, and brother,
Men learn to speak one thing, and mean another.

JOSCELIN.

So I have heard old John the steward say...
And he had liv'd in London many a day.

For me...I never felt a wish to roam,
Though hard the times, thought I...'still *home is home*.

EDWARD.

And wise wert thou!...Had I still reason'd so,
This heart had well escap'd a world of woe.

JOSCELIN.

Across the meadow, (now the streams are dried,)
Here let us strike the black-thorn bush beside;
This path leads up directly to the gate,
Near which old *Humphry Gilbert* liv'd of late.

EDWARD.

Is *Humphry* dead?...I saw poor *Jack*, his son,
Gasp out his last, when Acre's walls were won.

JOSCELIN.

Ay...so 'twas said...that boy was all his pride...
For him, poor man! he broke his heart, and died.

EDWARD.

I love my king....I love my country too....
Still to their cause this hand and heart were true:
Yet must I curse the sanguinary trade,
And mourn the desolation war has made.

JOSCELIN.

Well...now I wish this burthen safe at home;
'Tis time the welcome hour of rest was come.
When, by and by, the gate shall, clapping, fall,
And bring out wife and children, one and all:
How will they stare, with wonder struck, to see
A knapsack'd *soldier* bear me company!
But, wild-fire like, the news will run amain,
When once 'tis known that Ned's return'd again.

EDWARD.

Return'd indeed!...lam'd, wretched, and unknown,

Whom some will pity....but whom all disown:
No wife will clasp me in her tender arms,
No children greet me with resistless charms.
Who now shall bid me welcome to my hut,
By strangers own'd...or desolate, and shut?
Alas! of ev'ry social joy bereft,
This only consolation have I left,...
At ev'ry interval that toil allows,
When smiles and pleasure play on careless brows,
To seek the lonely church-yard's twilight gloom,
And mourn that best of women's timeless doom:
But, Josc'lin, as beneath the yews we pass,
Where o'er the high graves waves the dark green grass,
Tell me...since ev'ry villager else knows...
In what cold spot those precious bones repose.

JOSCELIN.

What bones? poor man! some shot has graz'd thy head!

EDWARD.

Didst thou not say my dearest wife was dead?

JOSCELIN.

Thy wife? not I! thou didst mistake me, man:...
I said...when so and so the story ran.

EDWARD.

She of a fever died:...

JOSCELIN.

Stay; not so fast!...
'Tis thy impatience has the truth surpast:
Thou wouldst not hear we out:...I meant to say,
That, after ling'ring many a tedious day,
A well-known beggar she had oft receiv'd,

Warm'd at her fire, and with her bread reliev'd,
Call'd at her door, her woeful state deplor'd,
And tender'd herbs and simples from her hoard,
Which, when all drugs had tried their pow'rs in vain,
Restor'd, and set her on her legs again.

EDWARD.

Thanks, thanks to Providence, we both still live!
Heav'n heard her pray'rs....my Mary shall not grieve!
Give me thy load! I'm young, and hale, and strong!
I know no ails....come! how thou lagg'st along!

JOSCELIN.

Nay, step thee on before....thou know'st the way,
I warr'nt I'll follow thee, without delay.
See, now the labours of the day are o'er,
The weary gleaners at the cottage door
Throw down their load; while, as they turn the key,

v. 249. A Sight of Edward's Cot and Children.

Fast pour the scudding poultry up the lea,
With half-stretch'd wing; a hungry, clam'rous train,
To thresh, with thievish beak, the ripe-ear'd grain;
And now, methinks, if these mine eyes see clear,
Thy boy and girls beneath our tree appear:...
Ay!...so it is!...and now they point this way....
"Who is that *soldier man?*" they seem to say.
Poor things! for thee their anxious watchings cease!
Nor have they heard the joyful news of peace.

EDWARD.

O, blessed hour!...united, through my soul,
The husband's and the father's feelings roll!
Dear little strangers! look you not so shy;
Haste! with glad tidings to your mother fly:
Tell her, with true repentant heart, I come,
To bring her comfort, and remain at home.

JOSCELIN.

Stay!...let me go before...thou follow near,
And witness how I claim thy Mary's ear,
In thy behalf....while thou remain'st unknown,
And weary sitt'st upon that green moss'd stone.
I'll say thou'rt just return'd from fields of fight,
And beg her let thee rest with her to-night;
I know her heart cannot this suit refuse;
Her eyes will swim in soft Compassion's dews:
Mind...here she comes!....
....Good neighbour how d'ye do?
I have a small request to make to you:
You have sufficient room, and I have none,
Here 's a poor soldier, wounded and undone,
Would beg a lodging and a crust of bread....

v. 278. Mary's Account of her Husband.

EDWARD.

Kind dame! a little straw will serve my bed;
I have been us'd to hardships, wet, and heat,
Forc'd on my arms to rest all night, and meet
Next morn the foe, each peril to renew,
Yet, thanks to God! his hand has brought me through!

MARY.

Poor man! I pity you!...alack, poor man!
Come in, I'll make you welcome as I can.
Well, well!...this is so strange...heav'n save my sight,
'Tis so exactly like my dream last night!...
Mayhap you knew, as you abroad have been,
An honest-hearted soul...one *Edward Green*...
Forgive my tears, that was my husband's name...
About your age he was...his height the same...
He left us years ago...yet, ah! poor soul!

My heart each wayward murmur should controul...
Yon are our children...fatherless are they,
And I have mourn'd, a widow, many a day."

EDWARD.

Had he a deep, red scar on his left hand?

MARY.

He had; th' impression of a burning brand,
By accident in early childhood made,
And to his grave, no doubt, the mark convey'd.

EDWARD.

Why then, I knew him...

MARY.

Did you?...Tell me where,
And when, and how...I beg you, let me hear!...
Yet why?...for he is gone!...Ah! fool was I
To court fresh sorrows, when my eyes were dry:

But who a tender husband can forget?...
Dear is that name! the mem'ry ever sweet!

EDWARD.

The war is o'er, our country's woes shall cease...
Who knows?...I come the messenger of peace.
Good woman! here's my hand, I give you joy,
No more let anxious fears your mind annoy...
I can inform you...

MARY.

O! I know this hand...
Art thou his ghost?...Do, answer this demand:
So pale thou look'st...like what I thought thy sprite,
That stood beside the bed the other night!...
No, no! thou art no ghost...but flesh and blood:
Is thy name Edward? 'scap'd the fight and flood:
Art thou *our* Edward? tell me! art thou he?

Speak, speak!...

EDWARD.

I am whom thou wouldst have me be,

Dear, kind, good soul!...I can no more forbear...

Call in my children! tell 'em who is here:...

Bend, bend your knees to Heav'n's almighty will!

I live, a father and a husband still!

Nay, do not swoon...forgive me...I will stay...

I'll make amends...I'll wipe your tears away!

I'll seek my gloves and buskins, cobwebb'd o'er,

My hook and scythe, that rust behind the door,

Gay as the lark, my former toils renew,

And labour, cheerful, all my days for you!

The sun is down, and fast declines the light...

Friend Josc'lin! thou must drink with us to-night...

The cyder keg we'll broach...if one there be...

v. 325. Encouragement for Reliance on Providence.

And honest taylor John shall share our glee.
Though fools may laugh, and scholar-men deny
That there's a *Providence* who rules on high,
I always thought so, and I always will...
You, Mary, own'd it...and you'll own it still:
O! this shall help us through life's rugged ways,
Confirm our hearts, and fill our mouths with praise.

ADIEU AND RECAL

TO

POETRY.

ADIEU AND RECAL TO POETRY.

No more, ye high, harmonic NINE!
I meditate your art divine:
I cannot stoop to vice or gain!
I cannot flatter folly's train!
Then hopeless must I quit the lyre,
Glowing with celestial fire!
Nor dare to court, with studied wile,
The harlot Fashion's specious smile.
O! ye, my native, flock-clad hills,
Ye white-thorn vales, and ling'ring rills,

Amid whose blossom'd shades retired,
His bosom nature's charms inspir'd,
Attest...did e'er your poet...say,...
Prostitute the heav'n-taught lay?
No!...it was his, with beating heart,
Warm votary of th' Aönian art,
To mourn, in pity, o'er the maid,
By vice and villany betray'd;
To strew the sweetest flow'rs that bloom,
O'er young Misfortune's early tomb,
Or tune the hymeneal lay,
On many a cheerful nuptial day,
While clear the village bells, around,
Launch'd on the gale the floating sound:
In spring, amid the poplar grove,
He join'd the gen'ral note of love;

And when brown Labour's sons would come,
To celebrate their *harvest home,*
With corn-flow'rs plum'd, and nodding grain,
The produce of the rifled plain...
Charm'd with the glowing western skies,
Whose clouds, deep-ting'd with ruddy dies,
Through ev'ry vast refulgent fold
Flam'd, glorious, with etherial gold...
He join'd the waggon's circling throng,
Caught their joy, and shar'd their song!
Enough!...ye Muses, ever dear!
Accept one tributary tear:...
We now, alas! forever part;
The world will tear ye from my heart!
Go seek some light...some vacant breast....
And with your presence make it blest:

Here, with the vulgar, be my lot,
Obscure, unenvied and forgot!
Now with the sons of earth I toil,
And grovel in this sordid soil;
Or, with wordlings void of *mind*,
To low pursuits alone inclin'd,
With taste and sentiment dispense,
To quaff the opiate bowl of sense;
While ease and apathy pervade,
And wrap me in their gloomiest shade.
No, POETRY! celestial maid!
In rainbow-tinctur'd vest array'd,
Companion of the heav'nly quire,
Grac'd with the ever-trembling lyre,
Desert me not!...return...return!
And bid, again, my bosom burn!

Bring all thy joys, and all thy cares,
Thy ardent hopes, thy anxious fears,
That with electric pow'r can shake
The nerves, and nameless rapture's wake:
But leave me not...else all life's round
Is barren waste, or thorny ground:
O! bring gay Fancy in thy train,
And lead to scenes of youth again,
With me retrace the willowy meads;
Whence bounds the duck from beds of reeds,
Beneath the yellow banks that guide
The dark stream, and embalm the tide,
Whose frequent circles still betray
The trout quick darting on his prey;
Or the minuter minnow race,
Flash their little fins in chase

Of glitt'ring gnats, which rashly brave
The surface of the circling wave;
While each youth, that loiters by,
Marks the shoal with sharpen'd eye,
Intent the crooked pin prepares,
And cautious flings the wormy snares.
Show me my native woods, whose trees
Retain the hollow-sighing breeze,
Beneath whose widely waving shade,
The woodman plies his humble trade,
While echo, from some time-scoop'd oak,
Repeats the hatchet's sounding stroke,
Mocks the sonorous laugh or tale,
That rises o'er th' inspiring ale;
The rook's loud croak, or clam'rous jay,
That sports her plumes from spray to spray;

91. Continued.

With ev'ry softer, sweeter note,
That swells the thicket-native's throat.
Oft let me, in this wild retreat,
The ruddy village children meet,
With bashful look and flaxen hair,
With tatter'd garb and bosom bare,
Who, from the sapling ashes rind,
Their vessels form, of rustic kind,
To hold the fragrant strawberries rare,
That skulk beneath their dark leaves there,
Or near the dusty wheel-track steep,
Along the sunny ridges sleep,
Oft guarded by the speckled snake,
That hisses in the neighb'ring brake.
Mid thick bushes let me stray,
When, bending down th' elastic spray,

The leather-jerkin'd shepherds spy
Clust'ring wood-nuts, brown and dry,
Rattling from each husky shed,
Thick o'er autumn's leafy bed.
Nor, when the long December night
Hangs each rural scene with white,
Let Imagination shrink
From yon precipice's brink,
Or the hill's declining side,
Swelling fair, in virgin-pride,
Where, with glowing hands and feet,
Hardy hinds and school-boys meet,
In mock combats to engage,
Fuming fierce with mimic rage,
While their missive bullets fly,
Spatt'ring white along the sky,

Amid the driving, thick'ning storm,
The grinding snowy globe they form,
With breathless toil...the pond'rous mass
Rips along the wounded grass;
Whilst, where'er impell'd to stray,
Desolation marks its way.
Fix'd on earth, of giant size,
At length immoveable it lies,
Till, in the vernal sun's warm glow,
It fast dissolves, with trickling flow.
Emblems these of life's turmoil...
Thus we fight, and thus we toil;
And soon the labour'd works we boast,
In Time's oblivious stream are lost!
Now to spring's green scenes I fly,
Where first the Primrose opes her eye,

On whose yellow lids appear,
Twinkling bright, a virgin tear;
Or, along the far-stretch'd mead,
Cowslips hang the tufted head,
From whose fragrant, honied lips
The early bee her nectar sips.
Here my native orchards blow;
There my fav'rite streamlets flow;
And, as I trace each dear retreat,
Many a well-known face I greet.
These, POETRY, are thine to give,
To bid the long-lost pleasures live:...
Nor retrospective views alone...
A fair creation of thy own
Hast thou to boast...what prospects lie
Extended to the mental eye!

Scenes which erewhile thy Shakespear charm'd,
Thy Milton's hallow'd bosom warm'd,
When, with the pinion'd seraph's pace,
He pass'd the bounds of time and place,
And, in prophetic vision, stray'd,
Down futurity's dark shade.
Now, methinks, I soar away,
To the realms of infant day,
Where the sorc'ress, Fancy's wand
Conjures up a wondrous band
Of " hydras and chimeras dire"...
Giants...genii...sprites of fire!...
Deities of monstrous race,
Sprung from many a mixed embrace,
Of names more strange than ever hung
On fabling Superstition's tongue.

Continued. v. 171.

Deep in some enchanted wood,
Horror curdles all my blood;
While, in many a magic rite,
Join the blackest fiends of night.
Aërial palaces arise,
That mock the splendors of the skies,
Whose arched doors, of massive gold,
To music's sweetest notes unfold,
While all the treasures of the mine
Around the less'ning columns shine,
Till, in prospective, 'neath the shade
By Tyre's profusest drap'ry made,
A starry throne, by slaves ador'd,
Supports some trembling nation's lord,
Who dares, with blasphemy and lies,
Usurp the titles of the skies!

While thus, with ravish'd sight, I gaze,
The ruby and the diamond's blaze
Forget to glow...down sinks the pile,
And art disowns the pageant wile.
On Araby's elysian plains,
Where one eternal summer reigns,
Now I drink the western breeze,
Floating o'er the spicy trees;
Or, lost in flow'ry wilds, I rove,
Of Cashmire's vale, or Ceylon's grove,
While all the Pleasures, hand in hand,
Tempt me with allurements bland.
At once the fairy vision fades,
And lightly fly th' unbodied shades.
'Neath other skies, for wonders new,
Adieu! ye orient climes! adieu!

Where the red car of ev'ning light
Consigns the arctic isles to night,
Hark! how the tumbling billows roar,
Along the solitary shore.
Where ne'er, by bold advent'rer led,
One daring sail was ever spread,
The frost-clad *genius of the pole*,
Seizing the blue waves, as they roll,
With gelid arm the stormy waste
Binds in icy fetters fast,
And bids an aweful silence reign
O'er all his desolate domain.
But who can paint the scenes...the views
That rise and mingle round the Muse?
As soon may we the gems of night,
Sea-sands, or particles of light,

v. 819. Apostrophe to Poetry.

Attempt, with studious toil, to count,
And give the wonderful amount.
What witch'ries, POETRY, are thine!
How strong, how bright thy visions shine!
Whether thou sing'st in fields of blood,
Or mid the roarings of the flood;
In Alpine caves, Arcadian bow'rs,
In fairy groves, or haunted tow'rs,...
Or on the slighted British plain,
Which oft pedantic bards disdain,...
Th' obedient passions own thy sway,
And all thy sov'reign will obey,
Awhile the heart its care foregoes,
And sinks, in calm and sweet repose.
THEE, Heaven, the sacred task assign'd,
To humanize and bless mankind;

To THEE we owe the hallow'd song,
That rose the patriarch tribes among,
In unison with David's lyre,
Thy numbers sooth'd his monarch's ire,
When the dark dæmon tore his breast,
And robb'd his struggling soul of rest.
Of yore, thy soft, prophetic voice
Bade the benighted world rejoice,
Isaiah caught thy rapt'rous strain,
To sing Messiah's birth and reign,
Revealing fair to ruin'd man,
Redemption's vast and wondrous plan!
Ere yet the rebel angels fell,
Devoted to the deepest hell,
Amid the universal joy
That reign'd through heav'ns eternal day,

v. 251. Continued.

While thousand, thousand harps of fire,
Around th' almighty throne respire,
Thy numbers, through the ringing sphere,
Charm'd the bending seraph's ear,
And swell'd, along the realms on high,
The tide of grateful harmony.
Yet THOU, from that magnific height,
Associate of the sons of light,
Scorn'st not to own the humblest name
That struggles with a gen'rous flame.
When frown'd the world, and friends were few,
In THEE a friend *indeed* I knew!
Then, shall I spurn thee from my breast,
Like an unwelcome, worthless guest?
O, no!...though Slander's venom'd tongue
Is prone to do thee ev'ry wrong;

Through thee the DEITY I hear,

To calm my doubts, to soothe my care,

And with *Hope's* promises to aid

The sinking mind, in life's dull shade...

Thy name I rev'rence....I espouse

Thy cause, and breathe to thee my vows.

O! bid thy radiance round me shine,

Still to thy lore my heart incline;

Thou in adversity's hard school,

Precept'ress sage, hast long had rule;

Teach me to bend, but not to break,

When Fortune spreads around her wreck;

To all the social virtues dear,

Still let me drop the warmest tear,

When Sorrow's saddest children grieve,

And ask the boon I cannot give!....

v. 283. Her final Triumph.

Then lead me on, from stage to stage,
Charm my youth, and cheer my age;
Till, on the weary bounds of time,
I hear th' angelic song sublime:...
Then, raptur'd, let me glide away,
To join the universal lay,
Beyond where first the star of morn
Fills, with light, her silver horn,
To view thee, in thy office high,
Aid the chorus of the sky;
On crimson clouds (a favour'd guest!)
Reclin'd at heav'n's eternal feast,
I see thee strike the pearly lyre,
With all a seraph's kindling fire:...
Now all beneath...around...above
Is music, gratitude, and love!

PASTORAL PIECES.

HARVEST-MORNING.

FAST on the hearth our skillet boils,
Pour up the milk...'tis breakfast hour;...
High time that we begin our toils:...
The sun is up, and past the show'r.
Hark! hear you not the reaper's song,
The dew-bespangled lane along?

There!...SALLY calls!...sweet maid I come!...
Stay; let me take my little store...
Bread, cheese, and apples, all the sum
My wallet boasts...I ask no more:
Our master's flaggon yields us still
Of cyder, or of ale, our fill.

The great folks all are yet abed....
No window ope....no smoke I see...
With gouty feet, and heavy head;...
Knew they my joys, they'd envy me!
Watch the first lark of morning rise,
And hear him carol to the skies.

From exercise I gather health;
No nauseous drugs my spirits need;
No cares have I for useless wealth;
Nor fashion, or fine clothes, I heed;
True bliss the longest day beguiles,
Where SALLY works, and sings, and smiles.

WOODBURY-HILL;

OR

INVITATION TO THE FAIR.

THE toils and the cares of the harvest are o'er,
Our grain is secure in the barn and the yard;
The wide-ranging swine the rough stubble explore,
Through fields else deserted, unfenc'd and unbarr'd.

No more of the reaper I hear the loud voice,
The song and the laugh, that delighted the vale;
The ploughman no more, with the maid of his choice,
His waggon drives, jocund, along the green dale.

Dark Winter approaches, to ravage the year,
But, ere ling'ring Autumn reluctantly flies,
Let us snatch the last joys in his train that appear,
And be merry to day...but "be merry and wise."

Thro' the village last night the strong pack-horses pac'd,
We heard their bells jingle adown the dark lane;
The clamorous drovers the roads have retrac'd,
And lowings, and bleatings, wide echo'd again.

See! the sun rises red from behind the dusk hill,
And the fogs at his presence roll slowly away;
Each leaf, on the tree of the orchard, is still,
And gilt the thatch'd roof with the far-streaming ray.

Come Lucy! come Hannah! away to the fair...
The booths are erected, the shows are begun;
Each maid from the farm and the dairy is there,...
Ere the sky-lark ascended, their labours were done.

The wages of summer, the fruits of our toil,
Shall purchase us pleasures unknown to the great;
Nor future remorse o'er the moment prevail,
When mem'ry again shall those pleasures repeat.

EXPOSTULATION

TO A

BIRD

STARTED IN A FAVOURITE WALK.

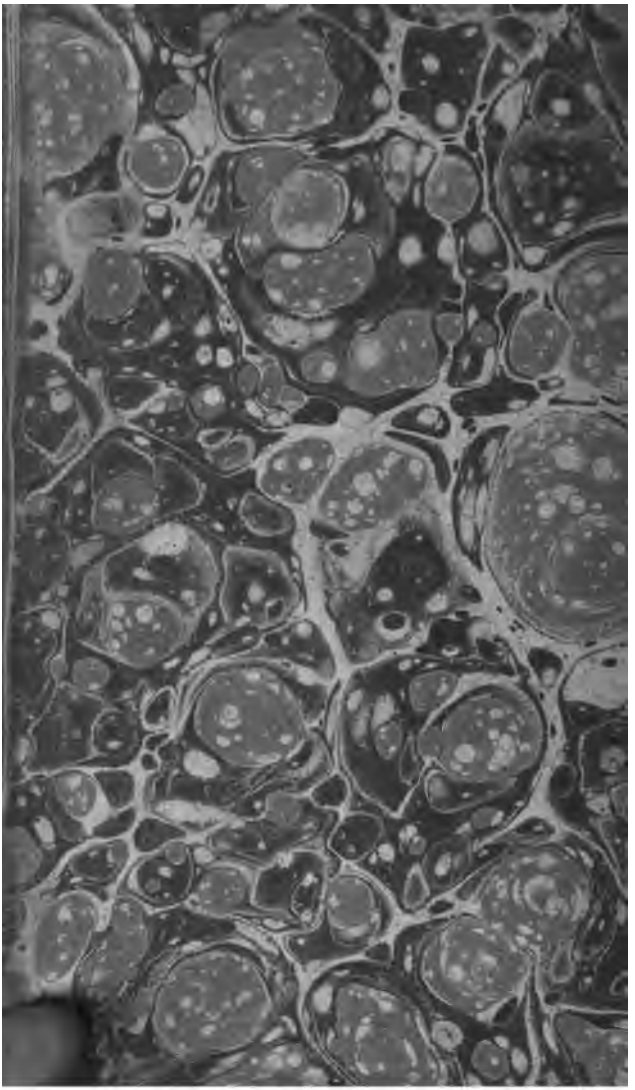
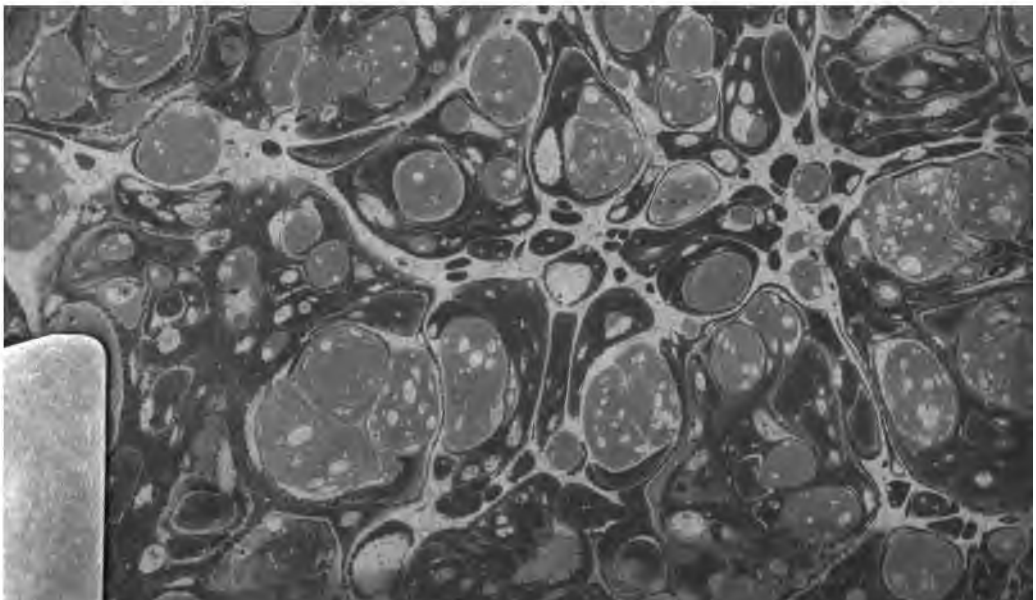
Sweet native of this brake-entangled dell,
Where, the last spring, I mark'd amid the bough
Thy pensile cradle wave, and heard the trill
Of thy soft mother's kind attentive spouse,
Who took his stand upon the hedge-row green,
To watch the school-boy's wild and wand'ring steps.
O startle not!...no stranger to this scene,
With cruel heart, or hand felonious creeps.
Here, where the moss climbs up the steepy bank,
On whose soft bosom basking violets lie,

v. 11. "A Note of Thankfulness and Praise."

And modest primroses, or cowslips lank,
Diffuse their sweets, unseen by vulgar eye,
Oft let me hear thee....while, like thee, I seek
This lone retirement of our earliest days;
And let us join our rural notes, to speak
The God of univeral nature's praise,
For 'tis his guardian hand us both sustains,
His common bounty we in common share;
For us he cloth'd the woods and deck'd the plains,
Adorn'd the meads, and scented all the air.
He gave *thy* dulcet throat the pow'rs of song,
He breath'd the tuneful rapture thro' *my* breast
He cast our lot those rustic shades among,
Where meek Simplicity has fix'd her rest.
Why then should I against thy life conspire,
Or seek thy thaldrom, while I range secure?

The Retort.

O, mild associate of the heav'n-taught quire
Dismiss thy fears....my presence yet endu
" But thou art MAN!" methinks such strain
" Well then may we suspect the plausive
Nor trust that those *our* feeble *race* should s
Whose faithless arts too oft their *own* bet

THE END.

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